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*Engraved by P. Newman from an Original Portrait by T. Ligon.*

*John Wilkes, Esq.*

*Published by Longman & Co. November 6<sup>th</sup> 1864.*

LETTERS,  
FROM THE YEAR 1774 TO THE YEAR 1796,  
OF  
JOHN WILKES, ESQ.

ADDRESSED TO HIS DAUGHTER,

THE LATE

*Miss Wilkes:*

WITH

A COLLECTION OF HIS

*MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.*

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A MEMOIR OF THE LIFE

OF

MR. WILKES.

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,  
PATERNOSTER ROW; J. HATCHARD, PICCADILLY;  
AND A. CONSTABLE AND CO. EDINBURGH.

1804.



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Printed by S. Gosnell, Little Queen Street.

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Reference-B.  
Sotheman  
12-12-23  
9096  
4 vol.

## CONTENTS OF VOL. I.



*The Life of Mr. Wilkes—and Poems ;  
many from original MSS. not before  
printed.*

## ERRATA.

### VOL. I.

Page 24, line 6, *for* assault, *read*, offence.

40, — 21, *for* over-ruled, *read*, overturned.

47, *insert the following Note, referable to line 1: Upon a question of evidence, as to the right of cross-examination.*

48, line 7, *for* indictment, *read*, information.

55, *insert, referable to line 1, N. Published in 1783.*

### VOL. II.

Page 217, line 2 from bottom, *for* I, *read*, you.

### VOL. III.

Page 294, line 14, *for* pó, *read*, pour.

### VOL. IV.

Page 166, line 2 from bottom, *for* Nous, *read*, Vous.

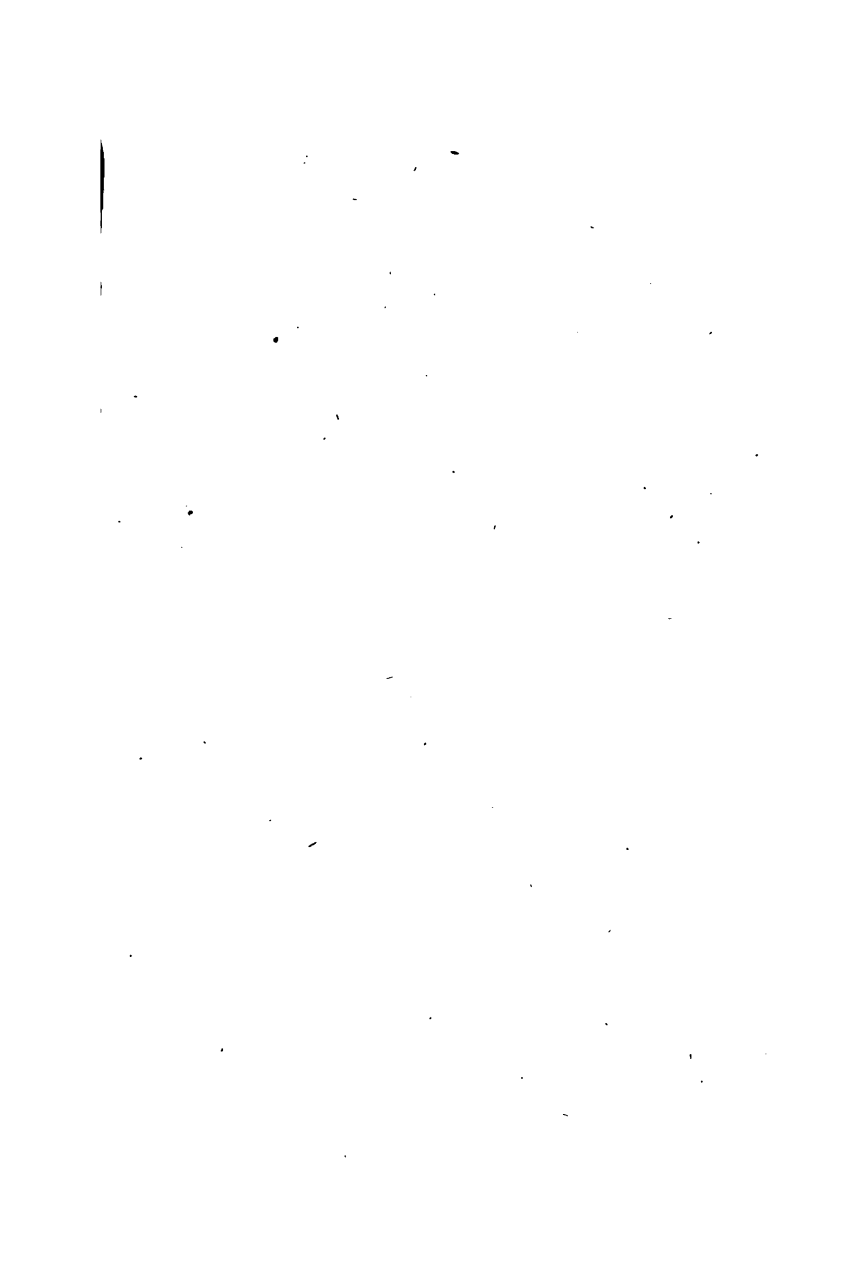
## PREFACE.

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IT might perhaps be thought, that the voluminous “ Works of Mr. Wilkes,” the publication of which has for several months past been announced to the public, would naturally supersede the materials of the *following* volumes. The truth is, that it has in reality *occasioned* their being thus committed to the press.

A feeling of delicacy on the part of those to whom the Letters, which constitute the present work, belonged, for some time prevented all intention of





connexion with Mr. Wilkes whilst yet “an unextinguished volcano,” renders him a fitter and more competent historian of those political explosions, which in the years 1763 and 1768 startled the country, than any other person. Leaving therefore to him the illustration of Mr. Wilkes’s political productions, it will be sufficient for the present editor to mention, on *his* part, what it is he has to offer to the public.

The present volume will contain some miscellaneous productions in verse, several of which have possibly appeared before in printed collections of fugitive pieces, but some also, which certainly exist only in manuscript, and which it is

believed are not in the possession of Mr. Almon.

The second volume, the first of the Letters, contains Mr. Wilkes's letters to his daughter from 1774 to 1783. They are addressed to her, either from his house in Prince's Court, whilst she was absent on occasional visits, or from Bath, during his periodical journies thither. A short series of letters also is addressed to her from Brighthelmstone.

The letters of the third volume are those written to her during her visits to Madame la Duchesse de la Valliere, in Paris, in the year 1784, and also in the years 1788 and 1789. Some also of an intervening date are inserted. The letters from 1789 to 1796, most of them



written at Sandham in the Isle of Wight, form the fourth and last volume; to which is added, because unconnected with the fugitive politics of his day, Mr. Wilkes's Introduction to his meditated History of England.

Many letters containing the mere minutiae of domestic arrangements, the editor has taken upon himself to leave out. He is aware however still that many more might be sacrificed, and the value of the collection, on the whole, not diminished. There are however links of connexion running from one to the other through many of them, that make it not easy to omit any great number.

As they now stand, they at least cannot fail to impress on the minds of those

who read them, a full conviction of their authenticity. Indeed as the originals are in the hands of the publishers, of their genuineness there can be no doubt. There are also some few letters (they are very very few) that a little betray some of the particular opinions which the author is known to have entertained. Perhaps also these might have been omitted, but the passages of this sort are so rare as hardly to give alarm to the most scrupulous. And it may surely be reasonably doubted, whether more would not have been lost with respect to knowledge of character, than would have been gained on the score of an overstrained decorum.

Whatsoever their faults may be, the

editor confesses that on the whole these letters have certainly amused him, and he is naturally led therefore to think that they will also amuse others.

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The publishers wish further to have it observed that they purchased the MSS. at a very liberal price after the perusal of three or four letters—More were not permitted to be read. It rests with the public to determine upon their merits. The task of the editor has been chiefly that of arranging the letters according to their dates, and taking care that no names should be published of living persons, respecting whom aught disrespectful occurs, if such passages there are.

MEMOIR  
OF THE  
*LIFE OF J. WILKES, ESQ.*

---

To write a Life of Mr. Wilkes, omitting to narrate in it those political transactions which distinguished it, would be negligence still more culpable than that of writing the Life of Bacon, forgetting that he was a philosopher: still more culpable, in as much as the fame of Mr. Wilkes arises in a far greater proportion from the memory of his political career, than the fame of Lord Bacon from our knowledge of the extent of his philosophical pursuits.

Since it is thought necessary therefore

by the publishers of these volumes, that a Life of Mr. Wilkes should be prefixed to them, it will of course be necessary for me briefly to relate the political circumstances of that life—a thrice-told tale, which, as I am in possession of no information, but such as already is in the hands of the public, I would gladly decline telling again.

After six prefaces to Shakespeare, some of them written by men of most distinguished talents, did Johnson, it is true, produce his wonder of a preface: but the subject was Shakespeare, and the mind employed upon that subject was the mind of Johnson. It is an exception only, not a contradiction to the established maxim, that it is difficult to give an air of novelty to materials which are old.

John Wilkes was born Oct. 28, 1727, in St. John Street, Clerkenwell. His father, Nathanael, was a distiller of great

opulence, and of a most respectable character.

From the nature of the government, and from the habits of the people of Great Britain, an easy intercourse subsists between all its orders of society. When industry has obtained for itself more than competence, it naturally becomes desirous of distinction. The powers of wealth, however great, are yet circumscribed: to the wealthy, the wealth of others is of small importance; and where there are many rich, riches of course give little pre-eminence. Another standard of merit is then resorted to, and abilities and rank are made the objects of regard. Mr. Wilkes was early accustomed to meet at the table of his father with persons of literary excellence, as well as with those of weight in the commercial world; and hence he imbibed that

taste for letters, which he continued to cultivate through life.

His education, however, though liberal, was domestic ; and, though not severe, yet sufficiently sober. His philosophy therefore (that of enjoying the world, and passing laughingly through it) was not so much the fruit of levity and custom, as of his own reflection ; and as adopted in compliance with his own view of human nature. And this he was himself very willing to have believed.

His parents (one of them, at *least*) were not of the church of England ; and Mr. Wilkes having passed his school years, partly at Hertford and partly in Buckinghamshire, was sent, not to either of our English universities, but with a private tutor, to the university of Leyden, where his talents attracted much notice.

In the year 1749 he married Miss Mead, heiress of the Meads of Buckinghamshire; from which marriage probably originated his connexion with that county. In April 1754, he offered himself as a candidate to represent in parliament the borough of Berwick, and addressed the electors in terms not ill according with that political spirit which afterwards marked his public conduct. He was not however on this occasion successful; but in July 1757, he was elected burgess for Aylesbury, and was also again chosen (at the *general* election) in 1761, for the same place.

Whether Mr. Wilkes's connexions with men of rank preceded his situation in parliament, or his seat in parliament facilitated his introduction into the circles of higher life, I am unable to say. But certain it is, that before 1760 his



acquaintance was both high and extensive.

That they, to whom industry, not inheritance, has given opulence, should frequently be found wanting in education, is natural. In their intercourse therefore with men of habits differing from their own, if they sometimes should connect themselves with the undeserving, it ought to excite little surprise. Want of judgment is their lot. But that men of understanding, men too, like Mr. Wilkes, proud of their understanding, should throw themselves into the service of the dissolute, merely because they boast a nominal distinction in society, might indeed occasion wonder, but that it is impossible long to wonder at that which is of daily occurrence. It may perhaps be venial for the rich, who want the advantage of a cultivated intel-

lect, to overlook immorality out of respect to presumed abilities : but the same indulgence is surely most unjustly bestowed, if extended to him, who, in defiance of his better knowledge, stoops to the company of the abandoned, whose ignorance in his heart he despises, merely because they are titled. This censure on the conduct of Mr. Wilkes, as far as it relates to his intimacy with the heroes of profligacy and Medmenham Abbey, will not, I think, be found too severe, when it is remembered that he himself used to speak in terms of utter contempt \* for their capacities, and to own that nothing but their condition in life would have induced him to notice them. Mr. Wilkes, acquainted as he was so early as 1754 with Lord Temple, and partially with Lord Chatham, one should

\* With the exception, I believe, of Lord Le Despenser, who, he said, had some imagination.

have thought, however, could well have dispensed with these associates, fashionable as they were : and there was a period of reflection, when he himself inclined to believe so. Whilst Mr. Burke (a political adventurer also) attached to the mild virtues of the Rockingham connexion, increased in weight, as he increased in years, and on his death-bed found himself surrounded chiefly by those who, as they had advanced in years, had also advanced in reputation and popular esteem ; Mr. Wilkes in old age stood single and alone ; politically triumphant indeed, but with no *personal* sharers of his triumph, and with little to elevate his mind, but the recollection of a fame, hourly on the decline, as new occurrences occupied and diverted the attention of the public.

The charm that chiefly operated in the formation of this (I will not say,

friendship) upon the mind of Wilkes was probably the self-flattering sense of superiority. It was acknowledged without reserve that he was the master-soul of the party, the life of the revel. Amongst the regular and the thinking, the superiority of parts is neither felt on the one side, nor acknowledged on the other, in *the same extreme* that it is amongst the dissolute. Amongst the regular and the thinking, the sympathy that unites them, is a feeling of discretion, chastened by moral considerations, and approved by reason, less violent, but more durable. Amongst the dissolute it is all in all; a sentiment of intoxication, overbearing and exulting; most slavish in adoration of its favourite, on the part of those who follow, and thinking that its own practice is vindicated by the mental superiority of its leader: most enterprising and despotic on the

part of him who leads ; who, as he knows the tenure of his sovereignty to arise from any thing rather than from sober thinking, is compelled to defend by effort, what has been usurped, not given from free and considerate choice. Having only one standard of excellence, that too built upon their own partial opinions, not upon the actual relations which exist in society, the union of such men is in truth a compact of tumult. Waves rolled along with waves beat against the beach, but they at the same time break against each other : their course is the same, but it is a course of jostle and opposition.

The praise of Mr. Wilkes, if to be chief amidst such companions be praise, was, that he surpassed his comrades. He was the tenth wave,

*" Altius insurgens decimæ ruit impetus undæ."*

with more wit, more fancy, more learning, more every thing than his co-mates in frantic gaiety.

With this praise indeed, whatsoever be its worth, he was not content, and in 1762 he began to employ himself in political discussion, as a pursuit more suitable to his talents and acquisitions. On the ninth of March in that year he published "Observations on the Papers relative to the Rupture with Spain, laid before both Houses of Parliament, on Friday, Jan. 29, 1762." As much of his information on this subject was supplied by Lord Temple (who, with Mr. Pitt, had retired from the cabinet in consequence of a negative being put upon their proposition for an immediate war with Spain), the success of this pamphlet is little to be wondered at. I imagine that it was originally given to the public without a name : for in the volume of letters published in 1769, under Mr.

Wilkes's own direction, there appears a letter from Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, entreating him to contradict a report, which had assigned "the Observations on the Spanish Papers" to himself. Mr. Wilkes, it seems, had playfully attributed to Dr. Douglas his own work, of which too in his answer he hints that Dr. Manduit might possibly be the author. These ruses de guerre, these artifices of literary warfare, are too common to be related with any feeling of blame: nor was the production such as was likely to disgrace those to whom it was assigned. It is written with perspicuity and spirit.

On the second day of the June following, the first number of the North Briton issued from the press, a work of which Mr. Wilkes was the chief supporter.

Amongst the memoranda of Gibbon, as given to the public by their noble

editor, is a note of a spirited dinner party, in which Col. Wilkes is mentioned as having supported his share of the conversation with much vivacity and intelligence. He is also related to have made a frank acknowledgment of his resolution to take advantage of the times and "make his fortune." That Mr. Wilkes, then Colonel of the Buckinghamshire militia, made such a declaration, there is no doubt. But there may be much and reasonable doubt, whether any construction can be put on this beyond an intimation of his desire to become an object of popular attention. Neither his habits of living nor his turn of disposition, were such, as to render any supposition, that a plan of pecuniary advancement crossed his mind, at all natural.

When Cardinal de Retz was reminded that his debts were large, he replied, "Cæsar's at my age were greater." Such



in all probability would have been the language of Wilkes, whose cast of temper was as little likely, as even theirs, to make interest the scope of his endeavours. It is not indeed easy to perceive how, even in imagination, he could promise himself, by the course of action which he adopted, that liberal provision as to worldly circumstances which he eventually obtained.

The truth, I believe, is, that to be known amongst men was his ruling passion, and it must be owned that he undoubtedly possessed many of the qualities which deservedly command renown. A weak administration and ill-directed public counsels afforded him a harvest of materials for attack. He saw his opportunity, "put in his sickle," and crowned his toil with plenty beyond expectation.

The North Briton had been established but for a few months, and had reach-

ed no further than the twelfth number, when it involved him in a quarrel with Lord Talbot : a quarrel which ended in a duel. By a retired scholar, unacquainted with the world, it might not unnaturally be made a question, whether a paper like this could by possibility have become a ground on which two reasonable beings should stake the hazard of their lives. And it should seem even to others that the liberty of political attack was certainly at that period in its infancy, when such a trifle occasioned such a meeting. The number complained of has for its subject some pensions, which had been bestowed by the administration of that day, amongst which were those allotted to Dr. Johnson and the author of Douglas. Had there been no juster cause of murmur than this, they who then held the reins of government might have continued safe in power. When how-

ever a spirit of dissatisfaction is abroad, the lightest circumstance will tend to widen the circle of its influence. Even this complaint was not without its effect. Lord Litchfield also and Lord Talbot bear a part in the paper, the chief assault against Lord Talbot being a sneer upon his horsemanship at the coronation. His Lordship however was irritable, and demanded, first by a note, and then by a message, a disavowal on the part of Mr. Wilkes of his being concerned in the composition of the number, which reflected upon his Lordship's name. Wilkes, to whose views an affair of this sort was not ill-suited, contented himself with a denial of his Lordship's right to interrogate him upon the subject. An appointment was made between them, and they exchanged pistol-shots at Bagshot, without hurt to either party. Mr. Wilkes having fired, "walked im-

mediately up to Lord Talbot, and avowed the paper."

Not being much at home in the law of duel, I am at a loss in what terms to speak of this transaction.

In justice to Mr. Wilkes, who knew well the conditions by which rencontres of this kind are regulated, and who was at the same time most religiously disposed to observe them, I am sensible that every thing was conducted in the usual mode, marked out by the sage legislators of fashion and courage. It might be otherwise thought, that, having driven by ridicule an opponent into a challenge, good-nature (and Mr. Wilkes wanted not good-nature) should have taught one to withhold one's fire. That no explanation can be given, till proof be first given, that it is not the dread of a pistol produces it, I know. But I do not equally feel convinced of the necessity of putting

the life of another in hazard, though fully assured of the good sense and propriety of risking one's own. As Lord Talbot however himself declared, upon the avowal, that Mr. Wilkes "was the noblest fellow God ever made," it is unnecessary to seek other evidence. And when the statesman (whom, except one, of the present day, I most regard) has had a word or two to say for bull-baiting, far be it from me to speak aught derogatory (in time of war too) of a custom

" Practis'd by statesmen, and to princes dear."

Mr. Wilkes immediately after the affair addressed a letter to Lord Temple upon the occasion, which has since been published, and which, though given *ex parte*, may yet be depended upon. The fidelity of the narration was confirmed by the seconds of the combatants, and Mr. Wilkes too was a man of veracity:

His conduct throughout was collected and spirited. One sentiment however of the letter is worth every thing else—that in which he tells his Lordship that his last act, previously to his going out, was to write to him a letter commending to his care the education of his daughter, and adding his thanks for the steady friendship with which for so many years he had been honoured. “Col. Berkeley took the care of the letter, and I have since desired him to send it to Stowe; for the sentiments of the heart at such a moment are beyond all politics, and indeed every thing else, but such virtue as Lord Temple’s.” The sentiments of the heart are at all times so valuable, that this single expression gives, in my mind, an interest to the whole epistle. Amidst all the factitious feeling, into which modes of life and habits of thinking mould poor human nature,

let but one genuine, unsophisticated, benevolent sentiment arise, and it at once awakens sympathy, such as that great posture-master, opinion, who twists and shapes our hearts into strangest distortions, vainly with all his art shall strive to excite !

Mr. Wilkes was now daily becoming more known to, and, from his opposition to Lord Bute, a greater favourite with, the public. The North Briton still went on, and Mr. Wilkes also became possessed of a most able coadjutor in Churchill, the poet. In March 1763, he addressed a dedication to Lord Bute, prefixed to the tragedy of Roger Mortimer, an unfinished play of Ben Jonson. Between Mortimer, the favourite of Isabel, the mother of Edward the Third, and Lord Bute, he drew a parallel necessarily not very favourable to the character of that nobleman.

The busy and more important part of the life of Wilkes was now arriving. The far-famed No. 45 of the North Briton appeared on the 23d of April, and on the morning of the 30th Mr. Wilkes was served by a King's messenger with a general warrant, in consequence of which he was on the same morning conveyed to the Tower. That "a warrant to apprehend and seize, together with their papers, the authors, printers, and publishers of a work," without naming who those authors, printers, and publishers were even suspected to be, has upon its very face an appearance of illegality, cannot be denied. But in justice to the secretaries of state, who signed it, it should be remembered, that for a hundred years the practice of their office had been to issue such ; and that in so doing they did no more than what precedents seemed to justify.



It is worthy of remark, that this event came not upon Mr. Wilkes unforeseen. It was a *piege tendu* for his adversaries, rather than a net thrown over him by them. And if the knowledge of this circumstance should in any degree tend to diminish the praise claimed loudly for him at the time, upon the score of presence of mind, it will at least establish, what is perhaps still more to his reputation, and what, I believe, was as truly the real character of his understanding, that he possessed the talent of weighing with skill the consequences of his public actions. In a letter addressed by him to the Right Hon. George Grenville, in November 1769, he writes thus :—  
 “ The affair of Mr. Beardmore has been misrepresented. The warrant against him, for several numbers of the Monitor was made *special*, but directed the *seizing* of his books and papers. Mr.

Wilkes knew Mr. Beardmore personally, went to visit him at the messenger's house, and endeavoured to persuade him to bring an action of false imprisonment and damages for himself, his clerk, books, papers, &c. against Lord Halifax. This Mr. Beardmore at that time absolutely refused. The transaction was in November 1762." Mr. Wilkes, therefore, had examined the nature of his case, before any step personally hostile to him was taken : and it must, I think, be owned that his battle was well fought, and that the advantage gained on the part of general liberty was not inconsiderable. Mr. Wilkes's behaviour under the arrest was intrepid and spirited in a great degree. One instance of his collectedness (which certainly sprung out of the incident of the moment) he thus relates himself in his second letter to the Duke of Grafton, 1766 :

“ Whilst some of the messengers and their assistants were with me, Mr. Churchill came into the room. I had heard that their verbal orders were likewise to apprehend him, but I suspected they did not know his person, and by presence of mind I had the happiness of saving my friend. As soon as Mr. Churchill entered the room, I accosted him, ‘ Good ‘ morrow, Mr. Thompson. How does ‘ Mrs. Thompson do ? Does she dine in ‘ the country ?’ Mr. Churchill thanked me, said she then waited for him, that he only came for a moment to ask me how I did, and almost directly took his leave. He went home immediately, secured all his papers, and retired into the country. The messengers could never get intelligence where he was.”

It has already been observed, that the secretaries might well stand *morally* excused in issuing a warrant, which had so

often been issued before without opposition by other secretaries. But it is difficult to say why they thought it necessary to command Mr. Wilkes into close custody, or why one of them should give orders for his being dragged out of bed at midnight. In all political contention between the governed and their governors so much of natural jealousy will ever be excited in behalf of the former, that he is little fit to exercise authority, who permits mere personal irritation to shape his conduct. If it be necessary for the state to punish, it can be necessary only on public grounds. Power to procure respect should at all times be accompanied with discretion : but when power takes upon itself the office of crimination, if its demeanour be not grave and decent, it ceases to be power, and is tyranny.

If that could be deemed a moral law,

which regulates itself, not by general utility, but partial instances, the morality of duelling, with regard to this peculiar case, might almost be admitted.

It is known that Mr. Wilkes was prevented from challenging Lord Egremont only by his Lordship's death. His Lordship could not without reproach, which even he perhaps (not much alive to feeling) would ill have been willing to sustain, have refused giving that satisfaction which his antagonist avowed his intention to demand, whenever, by his giving up the seals, his Lordship should become a private citizen. That ferocity, which the law of honour and of courtesy could not prevent, one should perhaps, were the correction certain, not altogether be displeased at its chastising. Fortunately, however, there are considerations of a higher sort to guide mankind than mere natural indignation ; and the

question therefore need not be agitated. It is to think more justly, to notice the superiority over his Lordship, which Mr. Wilkes derived from the occurrence, a superiority sufficiently mortifying to a proud man, and more mortifying, because brought upon him by his own misconduct. Through the whole interview with the two Secretaries, Mr. Wilkes bore himself in a high manner; nor perhaps weighing his situation fairly, is it to say too much, to use the expression, which he uses himself, that no friend of his had reason to wish one word unuttered.

Upon his commitment to the Tower, an application was instantly made to the Court of Common Pleas for his Habeas Corpus, and he was brought up on the 3d of May. On the 4th he was dismissed from his situation as colonel of the Buckinghamshire militia. On the

6th the validity of his warrant of commitment was argued, his plea of privilege was allowed, and he was in consequence discharged. He immediately erected a printing-press in his house, in George Street, published a narrative of the transactions in which he had been engaged, and renewed the publication of the North Briton. He visited Paris a few months after, and was there challenged, in the month of August, by a Captain Forbes, who, standing forth as the champion of Scotland, asked satisfaction of him, as the editor and conductor of the North Briton, for the calumnies heaped upon his native country. Mr. Wilkes behaved on this occasion with much moderation, and declared himself no prize-fighter. Being again urged, however, though in terms of politeness, he half complied, but was in the mean while put under an arrest by

the marshals of France, to whom he pledged his honour not to fight on French ground. When set at liberty he proceeded to Menin, and there awaited his challenger : but no meeting took place. The winter now advancing, Mr. Wilkes returned to England, previous to the opening of Parliament, and again took upon himself the superintendence of the North Briton. Mr. Martin, member for Camelford, and late Secretary to the Treasury, having been treated in that paper with much asperity, at length took occasion to say in a very full House of Commons, that the writer of the North Briton, who attacked him, was a cowardly as well as malignant scoundrel. Mr. Wilkes, though present, took no notice of the expression in the House, but early on the following morning dispatched a note to Mr. M. avowing himself to be the au-



thor of all the passages complained of —an immediate rencontre took place at the ring in Hyde Park.

“ When the gentlemen met, they walked together for a little while to avoid some company which seemed coming up to them. They brought each a pair of pistols. When they were alone, the first fire was from Mr. M.’s pistol: Mr. M.’s pistol missed Mr. W. and the pistol in Mr. W.’s hand flashed in the pan. The gentlemen then each took one of Mr. W.’s pair of pistols: Mr. W. missed, and the ball of Mr. M.’s pistol lodged in Mr. W.’s belly: Mr. W. bled immediately very much. Mr. M. then came up, and desired to give all the assistance in his power. Mr. Wilkes replied, that Mr. M. had behaved like a man of honour; that he was killed, and insisted on Mr. M.’s making his immediate escape, and

no creature should know from Mr. W. how the affair happened. Upon this they parted; but Mr. M. came up again in two or three minutes to Mr. W. offering him a second time his assistance, but Mr. W. again insisted on his going off. Mr. M. expressed his concern for Mr. W.; said the thing was too well known by several people, who came up almost directly; and then went away. Mr. W. was carried home, but would not tell any circumstance of the case till he found it so much known. He only said to the surgeon, &c. that it was an affair of honour. The day following, Mr. W. imagining himself in the greatest danger, returned Mr. M. his letter, that no evidence might appear against him; and insisted upon it with his relations, that in case of his death no trouble should be given to Mr. M. for he had behaved as a man of honour."

Mr. Martin was afterwards made the hero of Churchill's Duellist.

Whilst confined by the wound received in this encounter, the public sympathy in his behalf was still further awakened by an attack made upon him by one Dunn, who was overheard to threaten the life of Mr. Wilkes, and appears to have sought an interview, chiefly that he might put his threat in execution.

Mr. Wilkes, on the first day of the session of Parliament, had risen to address the chair of the Speaker on the subject of his privilege as a member of that House having been violated. It had usually been considered as the established custom of Parliament to enter upon the discussion of breaches of privilege before all other matters. In this instance the custom was overruled, and a message from the Sovereign was conveyed to the Commons, informing them,

that J. Wilkes, Esq. was the author of a most seditious and dangerous paper, and acquainting them with the measures which had been resorted to by the servants of the Crown. The House, the proofs of the libel being entered upon, proceeded to vote, that No. 45 of the North Briton was, as it had been represented to be, a false, scandalous, and malicious libel, &c. and it was ordered to be burnt by the common hangman. A day having been appointed for the hearing of Mr. Wilkes's defence against the charge of being the author of the libel, he thought it proper to acquaint the House of the incapacity occasioned by his wound, and further time was in consequence allowed him. The House, however, suspecting some unnecessary delay, appointed Dr. Heberden and Mr. Hawkins to attend him, in addition to his own surgeon and physician; and

further ordered them to report the state of his health. Mr. Wilkes politely rejected the offer of their visit. The House, he said, had desired them to visit him, but had forgotten to desire him to receive them, which he most certainly should not.

At the same time, in vindication of the professional gentlemen whom he himself had employed, he sent for Dr. Duncan, one of his Majesty's physicians in ordinary, and Mr. Myddleton, one of his Majesty's serjeant-surgeons, humourously telling them, that as the House of Commons thought it fit that he should be watched, he himself thought two *Scotchmen* most proper for his spies. About a week after he suddenly withdrew to France; a retreat which prudence, not timidity, occasioned. His circumstances were much involved, and, though fearless to encounter any peril, by which reputa-

tion was to be gained, he yet thought it wise to avoid the risk of suffering through those more private claims, against which there was no just defence, and from resisting which no honour could be acquired. From Paris, where he sought an asylum, he certified to the Speaker of the House of Commons, by the signatures of the physician of the King of France, and other gentlemen, his confinement to his room, and the impossibility, from his state of health, of his venturing to undertake the journey back to England. Unsatisfied, of course, with the neglect with which the House had passed over his complaint of privilege, he however had sufficient ground for triumph in the verdict found for him in the Court of Common Pleas. He had early brought his action against Robert Wood, Esq. the Under-secretary of State, for the seizure of his papers, as the sup-

posed author of the North Briton. It was tried, before a special jury, on the 6th of December, and 1000*l.* damages were given. The charge to the jury, delivered by Lord Chief Justice Pratt, concluded thus:—"This warrant is unconstitutional, illegal, and absolutely void ; it is a general warrant, directed to four messengers, to take up any persons, without naming or describing them with any certainty, and to apprehend them, together with their papers. If it be good, a Secretary of State can delegate and depute any of the messengers, or any even from the lowest of the people, to take examinations, to commit, or to release, and do every act which the highest judicial officers the law knows, can do or order. There is no order in our law-books that mentions these kinds of warrants, but several that in express words condemn them. Upon the maturest

consideration, I am bold to say, that this warrant is illegal ; but I am far from wishing a matter of this consequence to rest solely on my opinion ; I am only one of twelve, whose opinions I am desirous should be taken in this matter, and I am very willing to allow myself to be the meanest of the twelve. There is also a still higher court, before which this matter may be canvassed, and whose determination is final ; and here I cannot help observing the happiness of our constitution in admitting these appeals, in consequence of which, material points are determined on the most mature consideration, and with the greatest solemnity. To this admirable delay of the law (for in this case the law's delay may be styled admirable) I believe it is chiefly owing that we possess the best digested, and most excellent body of law, which any nation on the face of the globe, whe-



ther ancient or modern, could ever boast. If these higher jurisdictions should declare my opinion erroneous, I submit, as will become me, and kiss the rod ; but I must say, I shall always consider it as a rod of iron for the chastisement of the people of Great Britain." Without any fantastic or youthful love of liberty, the name of Pratt ought ever to be held dear in the estimation of Englishmen. They who are aware what professional feelings are, who are aware too what the feelings of a judge in this country are likely to be, most "chary of reputation," and jealous of legal knowledge, will surely attribute to nothing but conviction, the judgment thus manfully delivered. To a lawyer also the force of precedents will ever seem greater, than to other classes of thinking men ; and if it be recollected how sensitively the very mention of a bill of exceptions

has been received in modern days, in an instance too distinct from politics, and by a Chief Justice not deficient in hardihood ; praise cannot, I think, be withheld from him, who, with the wishes of the powers of his time against his decision, and in defiance of those various modes of appeal, which he himself pointed out, thus solemnly staked his legal name. Of any other than Lord Camden it would be unnecessary to speak thus long ; since to give their unbiassed judgments, free from all other considerations, is the characteristic of British judges. But there have not been wanting some, with regard to Lord Camden, who have believed, that rather from political feeling than his own firmly adopted judicial opinion, arose that conduct, which he pursued upon this occasion, and which he so admirably supported.

Mr. Wilkes's triumph was not with-

out cloud. His expulsion from the House of Commons was resolved upon the 19th of January 1764. On the 21st of February he was convicted in the Court of King's Bench, for republishing No. 45 of the North Briton, and also, upon a second indictment, for printing and publishing an "Essay on Woman." This Essay (in its printed state at least) was the produce of the hours wasted in the society of Medmenham Abbey; the fruit of the habits perfected, if not acquired, in that admirable academy. Never having read the poem, I am unable to pass any judgment either upon its folly or enormity; but there can be no doubt as to the judgment which ought to be passed upon its being, at this juncture, dragged into light. Mr. Wilkes, it has already been hinted, was one of a party which amused itself by the celebration of mad orgies at

Medmenham Abbey, a large mansion (formerly a convent of Cistercian monks) situated on the banks of the Thames, near Marlow, in Buckinghamshire. Sir Francis Dashwood, afterwards Lord Le Despencer, was an active brother of the order, which, after him, was denominated Franciscan. A sketch of the mental drunkennesses of the place is to be found in *Chrysal*, as well as in "The Collection of Letters" of Mr. W. of 1769. Mr. Wilkes, having set up a printing-press, was induced to have twelve copies of this poem struck off, perhaps to be presented to the members of the Abbey, who amounted to that number. Not a single impression however was in fact given to any one friend, nor was more than a fourth part of an intended volume ever worked off. Even this too had for months been disconti-

nued. Wilkes, however, was now a character of much popular importance, and it was resolved at all hazards to crush him. The counsels of anger are rarely wise. They could know little of human nature who promised themselves success from an artifice like that resorted to upon this occasion—To damn their enemy, they damned themselves. A domestic of Mr. Wilkes's was encouraged to steal one of the copies; it was put into the hands of Lord Sandwich, the Secretary of State; and Bishop Warburton's name having been ludicrously annexed to it, it was complained of by Lord S. to the House of Lords. "I never before heard the devil preach against sin," said Lord Le Despencer, who, though a placeman and a courtier, yet condemned this breach of honour in his brother peer. The people of Eng-

land are a moral people : it was expected that they would hear with indignation this folly of their favourite, and that the number of his partisans would necessarily diminish. The people of England, however, were wise enough to perceive that this charge was wholly unconnected with the public contest then waging betwixt Administration and Mr. W. They could not but know, that of the two accusations (that of republishing the North Briton, and of publishing the Essay), if the first had not been made, the second would never have existed. They reasoned, or felt at least, in the way the poet Cowper has made his Sovereign reason, "Business must be done—men of business alone can do it, and good men are rarely found under this description." They, perhaps too, thought that from some necessity like this must

the appointment of Lord Sandwich to the Secretaryship of State have arisen : for he was known to have been a Knight-companion in all the excesses in which Wilkes had shared. When at the same time it was found that he wanted that "honour of a gentleman" which gilded over the vices of their champion, is it wonderful that they transferred to those who preferred the charge, that indignation, which, it was hoped, they would feel with respect to him, *against* whom the charge was preferred ? Mr. Wilkes became still more a favourite, for he appeared to suffer persecution : his cause became still more a public cause, because his destruction more evidently than before was the object of Government.

But though he rather gained than lost favour with the *people*, it certainly

furnished him with no legal defence, Yet though legally he might, and was, truly said to have published this poem, in the larger meaning of the term, he, morally, can scarcely be considered as having done so ; and perhaps scarcely, in *strictness*, of having *intended* to do so. Certain it is, that no public depravity could well *ensue* from an impression so limited as that taken of the work in question. Mr. Wilkes being found guilty on both informations, and neglecting to make any personal appearance, when called upon to receive the judgment of the Court of King's Bench, was, towards the close of the year, outlawed. He addressed, from Paris, a Letter, in defence of his public conduct, to the worthy Electors of the Borough of Aylesbury, which was read with much avidity.

And here seemed to close his adven-



tures : but it was in reality a mere *pause* of action. There was yet a more intricate knot to be wound, and yet a more surprising denouement to take place as its consequence. The years 1765 and 1766 he passed in a journey through Italy. He knew too well, however, the nature of the multitude, not to be aware that a long retirement would soon cause him to be forgotten, even by those whose sympathy in his favour was most warm. When the Duke of Grafton, therefore, became Minister, towards the end of 1766, Mr. Wilkes solicited, in a letter to him, the clemency of his Sovereign ; and finding his address but faintly listened to, he, in a second letter to the same nobleman, again called the public attention to his case.

It is in this letter that he makes the declaration noticed by the eloquent au-

thor of the "History of the Life of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham," that his Lordship had seen and applauded the "Essay on Woman" some years before it was brought forward as an instrument of his ruin. "If I were to take the declarations made by himself and the late Mr. Potter *à la lettre*, they were more charmed with those verses after the ninety-ninth reading than after the first; so that from this circumstance, as well as some of his speeches in Parliament, it seems to be likewise true of the first orator, or rather the first comedian of our age, *non displicuisse illi jocos, sed non contigisse.*" Yet for these very verses Mr. Pitt, in a debate, scrupled not to name their author "a blasphemer of his God." Mr. Wilkes's situation, with relation to Lord Chatham, was peculiarly delicate. Lord Chatham was the brother-in-law of Lord Temple, his

dearest patron and friend. Every worldly motive opposed an attack upon Lord Chatham, but his spirit suffered him not to be trampled upon with impunity. The Duke of Grafton, when applied to (the Duke also had been a fellow-révellier), referred him to Lord Chatham—"The Duke did nothing without Lord Chatham." "When I found that my pardon was to be bought with the sacrifice of my honour, I had the virtue not to hesitate. I spurned at the proposal, and left my dear native London, with a heart full of *grief* that my fairest hopes were blasted, of *humiliation*, that I had given an easy faith to the promises of a minister and a courtier, and of astonishment that a nobleman of parts and discernment could continue in an infatuation, from which the conduct of Lord Chatham had recovered every other man in the nation."

Of all the pictures drawn for Lord Chatham by his opponents, that drawn by Mr. Wilkes has, perhaps, the most spirit ; and as, in my judgment, it is the most finished passage in all Mr. W.'s political compositions, I am tempted, though somewhat long, to transcribe it.

“ Of all political adventurers Mr. Pitt has been the most successful, according to the venal ideas of modern statesmen. *Pulteney* sold the people only for a barren title. The mercenary *Pitt* disposed of his popularity like an exchange-broker. Besides the same title with the other apostate, *Pitt* secured from the Crown a large *family pension*, and the lucrative *sinecure of the Privy Seal*, which he held for a few years. His retreat into the House of Lords was a political demise. He *passed away*, but is not yet quite forgotten. His

treachery to the cause of the people still loads his memory with curses.

“ He raised himself to the greatest offices of the state by the rare talent of command in a popular assembly. He was, indeed, born an orator, and from nature possessed every outward requisite to bespeak respect, and even awe. A manly figure, with the eagle-face of the famous *Condé*, fixed your attention, and almost commanded reverence, the moment he appeared ; and the keen lightnings of his eye spoke the haughty, fiery soul, before his lips had pronounced a syllable. His *tongue dropped venom*. There was a kind of fascination in his look when he eyed any one *ashance*.

“ Nothing could withstand the force of that contagion. The fluent *Murray* has faltered, and even *Fox* shrunk back appalled from an adversary *fraught with fire unquenchable*, if I may borrow the

expression of our great *Milton*. He always cultivated the art of speaking with the most intense care and application. He has passed his life in the culling of words, the arrangement of phrases, and choice of metaphors, yet his theatrical manner did more than all, for his speeches could not be read. There was neither sound reasoning, nor accuracy of expression, in them. He had not the power of argument, nor the correctness of language, so striking in the great Roman orator, but he had the *verba ardentia*, the bold glowing words. This merit was confined to his speeches: for his writings were always cold, lifeless, and incorrect, totally void of elegance and energy, sometimes even offending against the plainest rules of construction. In the pursuit of eloquence he was indefatigable. He dedicated all his powers and faculties, and he sacrificed every pleasure

of social life, even in youth, to the single point of talking well.

*Multa tulit fecitque puer ; sudavit et alsit ;  
Abstinuit venere et vino,*

to a greater degree almost than any man of this age. He acknowledged that, when he was young, he *always* came late into company, and left it early. He affected at first a sovereign contempt of money, and when he was Paymaster made a parade of two or three very public acts of disinterestedness. When he had effectually duped his credulous friends, as well as a timid ministry, and obtained enormous legacies, pensions, and sinecure places, the mask dropped off. Private interest afterwards appeared to be the only idol to which he sacrificed. The old Duke of Newcastle used to say, that *Mr. Pitt's talents would*

*not have got him forty pounds a year in any country but this.*

“ At his entrance into Parliament he attacked *Sir Robert Walpole* with indecent acrimony, and continued the persecution to the last moment of that Minister's life. He afterwards paid servile and fulsome compliments to his memory, not from conviction, as appeared from many other particulars, but to get over a few *Walpolians*. He had no fixed principle, but that of his own advancement. He declared for and against continental connexions, for and against German wars, for and against Hanoverian subsidies, &c. &c. still preserving an unblushing, *unembarrassed* countenance, and was the most perfect contradiction of a man to himself which the world ever saw. If his speeches in Parliament had been faithfully published to the English, soon after they were de-



livered, as those of Demosthenes and Cicero were to the Greeks and Romans, he would have been very early detected, and utterly cast off by his countryman.

“ He is said to be still living at *Hayes, in Kent.*”

The remembrance of Mr. Wilkes, still in exile in France, was kept alive in the year 1767 by “ A Collection of the genuine Papers, Letters, &c. in the Case of J. Wilkes, late Member for Aylesbury in the County of Bucks; *à Paris, chez J. W. imprimeur, Rue du Colombier, Fauzburgh St. Germain, à l’Hotel de Saxe.*” In 1768 he again appeared *personally* upon the theatre of public action. On the 4th of March he addressed a letter of submission to the King, which was delivered by his servant at Buckingham Gate. This, like his first letter to the Duke of Grafton, supplicated pardon. He owed to his discretion that he was

enabled to do this without meanness. In no one syllable of his otherwise offensive publications had he offended against the personal respect due to the prince on the throne. By distinguishing on every occasion between the Sovereign and his Ministers, he had with the greatest care avoided the possibility of such an imputation.

As the constitution authorizes this distinction by the maxim "the King can do no wrong," it were to be wished that the Sovereign himself could; in conformity to the maxim, on all occasions raise himself above all private feelings of displeasure. Perhaps, however, it were asking more of human nature than can soberly be looked for. If trust is to be reposed, it naturally will be reposed in those who are personally known and regarded. Having once reposed trust, it is not easy to consider the acts of

those who have been trusted as wholly indifferent. The very act of reposing confidence implies a preference: about the conduct of those who are preferred it is scarcely possible not to be anxious, and anxiety will necessarily create displeasure towards whatsoever thwarts the success of that conduct. This displeasure and this apathy are, like all other human feelings, to be judged of, not in the abstract, but according as to their predominance they are pernicious or useful to the public interests. To the general character of the Sovereign the love of his people best will speak, and few monarchs have on the whole more possessed the personal affection of their subjects than the King. Against Mr. Wilkes, however, considerable displeasure is, at this period, said to have been entertained. So ungrateful was the sound of Wilkes and No. 45 deemed to

be to the high personage who is now spoken of, that about 1772 a prince of the blood, then a mere boy, having been chid for some boyish fault, and wishing to take his boyish revenge, is related to have done so by stealing to the King's apartment, shouting at the door "Wilkes and No. 45 for ever!" and speedily running away. It is hardly necessary to add, (for who knows not the domestic amiableness of George the Third?) that his Majesty laughed at the trick with his accustomed good humour. It must be owned, indeed, that, *after* 1770, Mr. Wilkes must still have been more obnoxious than at the period at which his letter was presented: the transactions of the two intervening years are such as to afford cause for deep lamentation, that his prayer had not been heard with indulgence. A pardon at that moment would have disarmed him for ever. But

he was not a man easily to yield to difficulties. His petition never reaching the royal ear, or reaching it, being rejected, he determined upon a step which, like the rapid march of a skilful general, was calculated to ensure victory by exciting surprise. It was a plan similar to that of seizing by a *coup de main* the metropolis of an empire ; and the plan was successful. Parliament was now drawing nigh to the term of its natural expiration : it was dissolved, and writs issued for the election of a new one. On the 11th of March the public were awakened by the following address :

“ *To the Liverymen of the City of  
London.*

“ Gentlemen and Fellow-citizens,

“ In deference to the opinion of  
some very respectable friends, I presume

to offer myself a candidate for my native city of London, at the ensuing general election. The approbation you have been pleased on several occasions to express of my conduct, induces me to hope that the address I have now the honour of making to you, will not be unfavourably received. The chief merit with you, gentlemen, I know to be a sacred love of liberty, and of those generous principles, which at first gave, and have since secured to this nation, the great charter of freedom. I will yield to none of my countrymen in this noble zeal, which has always characterized Englishmen. I may appeal to my whole conduct, both in and out of Parliament, for the demonstration that such principles are deeply rooted in my heart, and that I have steadily pursued the interests of my country, without regard to the powerful enemies I created, or the

manifest dangers in which I must thence be necessarily involved ; and that I have fulfilled the duties of a good subject. The two important questions of public liberty, respecting general warrants and the seizure of papers, may perhaps place me among those who have deserved well of mankind, by an undaunted firmness, perseverance, and probity ; these are the virtues which your ancestors never failed to exert in the same national cause of liberty, and the world will see renewed in their descendants on every great call of freedom and our country. The nature and dignity of the trust, gentlemen, which I now solicit, strike me very forcibly. I feel the warmest zeal for your interests, and affection for your service. I am conscious how unequal my abilities are, yet fidelity and integrity shall in some measure compensate that deficiency, and I will endeavour through

life to merit the continuance of your approbation ; the most precious reward to which I aspire. If I am honoured with so near a relation to you, it will be my ambition to be useful, to dedicate myself to your service, and to discharge with spirit and assiduity, the various and important duties of the distinguished station in which I may be placed by the favour of you, gentlemen, the Livery of London.

“ I am, with the utmost respect,

“ Your most faithful and

“ Obedient humble servant,

“ *March 10,*                      “ *JOHN WILKES.*

“ 1768.”

Nothing could well be more adventurous than this declaration. Broken in fortune, outlawed, two convictions upon record against him, should that outlawry be reversed, the Throne and its ministers



arrayed in opposition to him, unsupported as heretofore by connexion with the great, with nothing on his side but the favour of the multitude—relying upon that favour, and animated with an undaunted spirit of energy, he took his stand, and dared his antagonists to remove him. This stand was not made unadvisedly. His letter of submission to the King was written on the 4th of March, his address to the liverymen of London on the 10th of the same month. It was probably *intended* as prelude to the course upon which he had determined. It was not the mere populace only that supported him. He was looked up to by the middle ranks of society as a martyr for their rights. The fate of the letter in no way could have been other than of advantage to him. If received with benignity, and his pardon granted, from many of his difficulties he

would have instantly been relieved. Couched in terms of humility to the Sovereign, yet as it still arraigned the former servants of the Crown, he perhaps scarcely expected it would be treated otherwise than it was. If unnoticed, or rejected, as the enmity borne towards his person and his cause would be more apparent, his claim upon the affection of the people would of course be strengthened. His outlawry was, he knew, no bar to his return to Parliament. Precedents of outlaws sitting as representatives existed, at once precise and numerous. The love of the people was his ; to that he trusted, and through that he triumphed. He threw himself into their embrace, and it at length bore him safely to shore

———præceps saltu sese omnibus armis

In fluvium dedit : ille suo cum gurgite flavo

Accepit venientem, ac mollioribus extulit ulnis.

The election for the city of London took place on the 16th. Six candidates started along with him; and though finally the lowest in number on the poll, he yet had a respectable minority of votes. Baffled in the city, he declared himself a candidate for the county. The sympathy of popular opinion in the interval spread from man to man. The beacon on one hill was answered by the flame kindled on the next. They were friendly signals, that the country was in arms for his defence. He carried his election for Middlesex on Monday the 28th, against two gentlemen of large property and hereditary interest, and carried it by a great majority. The whole poll was conducted with the greatest regularity and order, nor was the least violence offered to the voters of either party.

Mr. Wilkes, on the 22d, a week pre-

vious to the day of election for Middlesex, wrote to the Solicitor of the Treasury, intimating his intention, in the ensuing term, to appear personally in the Court of King's Bench. Mr. Wilkes fulfilled his engagement, and no sooner had finished the address in which he surrendered himself up to the discretion of the Court, than the Attorney General moved for his instant commitment upon the outlawry. Mr. Attorney General (Thurlow) was replied to by Mr. Sergeant Glynn and other counsel, who moved, on their part, for a writ of error: it had before been demanded of the law-officers of the Crown, and had been refused. Lord Mansfield and the rest of the judges concurred in opinion that they could not commit upon a voluntary appearance. "The Attorney General could not with the least appearance of reason or law move for the commitment

of a person who was not legally before them ; nor had the counsel for the defendant any better plea for their motion in favour of a man who appeared in Court gratis." Both parties were dismissed. On the 27th, at noon, Mr. Wilkes was served with a writ of *capias utlagatum*, and in about a week after, writs of error were allowed. Bail, offered on behalf of Mr. W. was rejected by the Attorney General, and he was consequently ordered to the King's Bench Prison. The uproar of the multitude during these events, and the armed preparation and military precaution of the ministry, are well known. Mr. W.'s letter of thanks to the electors of Middlesex on his being chosen their representative, was written to them, from prison, on the 5th of May. The argument upon the outlawry was heard upon the 7th of the same month, and on the 9th of June

in the following term it was finally reversed.

Having before quoted a judgment of Lord Chief Justice Pratt, I shall possibly be forgiven by those who are likely to be the readers of these volumes, should I transcribe the still more eloquent conclusion of Lord Chief Justice Mansfield's judgment upon the present subject. "I have now gone through the several errors assigned by the defendant, and which have been ingeniously argued, and confidently relied on, by his counsel at the bar : I have given my sentiments upon them ; and if, upon the whole, after the closest attention to what has been said, and with the strongest inclination in favour of the defendant, no arguments which have been urged, no cases which have been cited, no reasons that occur to me, are sufficient to satisfy me in my conscience and judgment, that this out-

lawry should be reversed, I am bound to affirm it—and here let me pause. Many arguments have been suggested, both in and out of Court, upon the consequences of establishing this outlawry, either as they may affect the defendant as an individual, or the public in general. As to the first, whatever they may be, the defendant has brought them upon himself; they are inevitable consequences of law arising from his own act; if the penalty, to which he is thereby subjected, is more than a punishment adequate to the crime he has committed, he should not have brought himself into this unfortunate predicament, by flying from the justice of his country; he thought proper to do so, and he must taste the fruits of his own conduct, however bitter and unpalatable they may be; and, although we may be heartily sorry for any person who has

brought himself into this situation, it is not in our power, God forbid it should ever be in our power, to deliver him from it. We cannot prevent the judgment of the law by creating irregularities in the proceedings; we cannot prevent the consequences of that judgment by pardoning the crime; if the defendant has any pretensions to mercy, those pretensions must be urged, and that power exercised, in another place, where the constitution has wisely and necessarily vested it: the Crown will judge for itself; it does not belong to us to interfere with punishment; we have only to declare the law; none of us had any concern in the prosecution of this business, nor any wishes upon the event of it; it was not our fault that the defendant was prosecuted for the libels upon which he has been convicted; I took no share in another place, in the



measures which were taken to prosecute him for one of them ; it was not our fault that he was convicted ; it was not our fault that he was outlawed ; it was not our fault that he rendered himself up to justice ; none of us revived the prosecution against him ; nor could any one of us stop that prosecution when it was revived : it is not our fault if there are not any errors upon the record, nor is it in our power to create any if there are none ; we are bound by our oath and our consciences to give such a judgment as the law will warrant, and as our reason will approve ; such a judgment as we must stand or fall by, in the opinion of the present times, and of posterity ; in doing it, therefore, we must have regard to our reputation as honest men, and men of skill and knowledge competent to the stations we hold ; no considerations whatsoever should mislead

us from this great object, to which we ever ought, and, I trust, ever shall direct our attention. But, consequences of a public nature, reasons of state, political ones, have been strongly urged (private anonymous letters sent to me I shall pass over), open avowed publications, which have been judicially noticed, and may therefore be mentioned, have endeavoured to influence or intimidate the Court, and so prevail upon us to trifle and prevaricate with God, our consciences, and the public. It has been intimated, that consequences of a frightful nature will flow from the establishment of this outlawry; it is said the people expect the reversal, that the temper of the times demands it, that the multitude will have it so, that the continuation of the outlawry in full force will not be endured, that the execution of the law upon the defendant will be

resisted : these are arguments which will not weigh a feather with me. If insurrection and rebellion are to follow our determination, we have not to answer for the consequences, though we should be the innocent cause—we can only say, *fiat justitia ruat cœlum* ; we shall discharge our duty without expectations of approbation, or the apprehensions of censure ; if we are subjected to the latter unjustly, we must submit to it ; we cannot prevent it ; we will take care not to deserve it. He must be a weak man indeed who can be staggered by such a consideration.

“ The misapprehension or the misrepresentation of the ignorant or the wicked, the *mendax infamia*, which is the consequence of both, are equally indifferent to, unworthy the attention of, and incapable of making any impression on men of firmness and intre-

pidity.—Those who imagine judges are capable of being influenced by such unworthy indirect means, most grossly deceive themselves ; and for my own part, I trust that my temper, and the colour and conduct of my life, have clothed me with a suit of armour to shield me from such arrows. If I have ever supported the King's measures, if I have ever afforded any assistance to Government ; if I have discharged my duty as a public or private character, by endeavouring to preserve pure and perfect the principles of the constitution, maintain unsullied the honour of the courts of justice, and, by an upright administration of, to give a due effect to, the laws ; I have hitherto done it without any other gift or reward than that most pleasing and most honourable one, the conscientious conviction of doing what was right. I do not affect to scorn the

opinion of mankind; I wish earnestly for popularity, I will seek and have popularity; but I will tell you how I will obtain it; I will have that popularity which follows, and not that which is run after. It is not the applause of a day, it is not the huzzas of thousands, that can give a moment's satisfaction to a rational being: that man's mind must indeed be a weak one, and his ambition of a most depraved sort, who can be satisfied with such wretched allurements, or satisfied with such momentary gratifications. I say with the Roman orator, and can say it with as much truth as he did, *Ego hoc animo semper fui, ut invidiam virtute partam, gloriam non infamiam, putarem.* But the threats have been carried further; personal violence has been denounced, unless public humour be complied with. I do not fear such threats, I do not believe there is

any reason to fear them : it is not the genius of the worst men in the worst of times to proceed to such shocking extremities : but if such an event should happen, let it be so ; even such an event might be productive of wholesome effects ; such a stroke might rouse the better part of the nation from their lethargic condition to a state of activity to assert and execute the law, and punish the daring and impious hands which had violated it ; and those who now supinely behold the danger which threatens all liberty, from the most abandoned licentiousness, might, by such an event, be awakened to a sense of their situation, as drunken men are sometimes stunned into sobriety. If the security of our persons and our property, of all we hold dear and valuable, are to depend upon the caprice of a giddy multitude, or be at the disposal of a giddy mob ; if, in

compliance with the humours, and to appease the clamours of those, all civil and political institutions are to be disregarded or overthrown, a life somewhat more than sixty is not worth preserving at such a price, and he can never die too soon who lays down his life in support and vindication of the policy, the government, and the constitution of his country\*."

The Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench gave a judgment as to learning and to bearing, not differing

\* To this, in "A Complete Collection of the genuine Papers, Letters, &c. in the Case of J. Wilkes, Esq." published by Mr. W. at Berlin, 1769, are subjoined these queries :

1. Is not this rather a panegyric on the speaker himself, than a discourse on the reversal of the outlawry ?

2. Would it not have been more proper for the establishment than the reversal of the outlawry, &c. ?—The reversal was for a defect in form.

from that delivered *seriatim* by the other judges. But such was his dignity of manner, and such the high tone of feeling with which he poured forth his polished periods, that the very populace, which thronged tumultuously the immense hall, "heard away their rage" as they hung attentive upon his accents. The contrast between him and his brothers of the bench was such, that Mr. Wilkes himself exclaimed, when one of them had ended his harangue in phrase more rude and barren than the rest, "This is a draught of hog-wash after a bottle of champagne."

The outlawry reversed, objections were next taken to the verdicts found against him. Amongst others, one was vehemently urged on the ground of the informations having been altered by Lord Mansfield, without the consent of the solicitor of the defendant, the evening



previous to the trial. The word *tenor* was substituted for *purport*. That it was altered without the consent of the defendant's agent is true; but in none but a political cause would a practitioner of experience have withheld his consent.

The objections were over-ruled; and he was sentenced, for re-printing and publishing the North Briton, No. 45, to pay a fine of 500*l.* and (having already been imprisoned two) to a confinement of ten months longer. For publishing the Essay on Woman his sentence was to pay a second fine of 500*l.* and to be imprisoned for another twelvemonth. He was at the expiration of these terms to find securities for his future conduct during seven years, himself under a penalty of 1000*l.* his sureties in 500*l.* each. This judgment was far milder than had been expected

by the public: and it is said indeed that Mr. Wilkes might, had he chosen so to do, have certainly made, at this period, his peace with Government. A negotiation was opened with him upon the subject, with the knowledge of the Duke of Grafton (the Prime Minister), and one condition only was proposed to him, in which he refused to concur. Mr. Wilkes declared, on the 3d of November, to the freeholders of Middlesex, that he should shortly present to the House of Commons a petition relative to his case, upon which he should demand their decision. This, Administration foresaw, would necessarily involve in its discussion all the transactions of the late Parliament. The condition therefore proposed, upon which he was to take his seat unimpeded, was, that this petition should not be presented. A pledge, however, he conceived had

been given to the contrary, and from this public pledge he resolved not to withdraw. The petition was laid before the House on the following day by Sir J. Mawbey. It was received as the declaration of a second war.

On the 10th of May the populace had assembled in great numbers about the neighbourhood of the King's Bench Prison, where Mr. Wilkes was in confinement. The riot-act was read by the justices of Surrey, and the mob not dispersing, the military was imprudently ordered to fire: several persons were slightly wounded, some more seriously, and one was killed on the spot. Lord Weymouth, the Secretary of State, had written to the magistrates a letter dated April 17, exhorting them to firmness in the suppression of any popular tumult, which might arise: and Lord Barrington, the Secretary at War, returned

written thanks after the fatal 10th of May, in the name of his Majesty, to the officers and soldiers of that regiment of guards, which had been employed upon the occasion. These two letters were transmitted to the newspapers by Mr. Wilkes, accompanied with some prefatory remarks, in which he termed the unhappy transaction a massacre. Of these remarks he avowed himself, at the bar of the House of Commons, to be the author. The remarks were voted libellous, and he, as the author of them, was expelled. If the people were irritated before, they were still more irritated now. If Mr. Wilkes was dear to them before, he was now endeared to them tenfold. If *before* the voice of the county of Middlesex was favourable to him, it was now wholly his own : it uttered no sound but that of his name, unless it was the cry " Liberty," which,

echoed far and wide, was considered as almost synonymous with "Wilkes." He was rechosen on the 16th of February, without opposition. On the following day he was declared by a majority of the House of Commons *incapable* of being elected into that Parliament, and the election was vacated. This was assuming at once that the expulsion of a member of Parliament was equivalent to exclusion; and that a single branch of the legislature could control by its fiat the choice of electors however explicitly declared. But it rested not here. On the 17th of February, the day after his re-election, Mr. Wilkes was again expelled, the House resolving that he was incapable of being elected into that Parliament. Notwithstanding this resolution, he was a third time elected, again without opposition; a Mr. Dingley indeed offering himself as

a candidate, but not obtaining a single freeholder even to nominate him. That election was also, on the next day, declared void. On the 13th of April Mr. Wilkes was, a fourth time, elected by a majority of 1143 votes, against Mr. Luttrell, who had only 296. The same day the House of Commons resolved "that Mr. Luttrell ought to have been returned." On the 29th of April a petition was presented by Sir George Saville, from the freeholders of Middlesex, declaring that their intention was not, in voting for Mr. Wilkes, to throw away those votes, or waive their right of representation, and praying therefore against the return of Mr. Luttrell. Notwithstanding which it was finally determined, on the 8th of May, "that Mr. Luttrell was duly elected." Mr. Wilkes's contests, like the battles of Homer, arose one above the other in

progressive majesty. Not *within* the walls of the legislative assemblies only was it fought, but *without* also ; in the wider plains of literature, of *general* intellect, and *general* feeling. In this, his fiercest and most important fight, the immortals descended into the war. The gravity of Johnson, biassed by its favourite political prepossessions, brought forward to the aid of power its impressive weight. The sage Blackstone, with his book of wisdom, the characters of which were attempted to be read against him, supported also the cause of ministers. Burke, more subtle, if less vehemence than in latter days, broke his lance, in defence of popular right ; Burke, supporting as utility seemed to him to require, the people or the throne ; and turning, like the poet's feigned Almanzor, in favour of the weaker side, the scale of fortune. Above all, the fiery,

and the rapid, Junius, in dazzling armour, but his beaver down, coursed along the lists, scattering lightnings round him. Nor were the thunders rolled in the senate less awful than the eloquence of the press. Lord Chatham, how much soever he had once personally condemned Mr. Wilkes, was now, with the fulness of his great soul, of his party ; for his party was that of the constitution. He quoted Lord Somers and Lord Holt ; “ he called them honest men, who knew and loved the English constitution. I vow to God (to Lord Mansfield, who defended the measures of the majority), I vow to God, I think your Lordship equals them both in *abilities*. The House of Lords is privileged to interfere, in the case of an invasion of the people’s liberties, and the case of the county of Middlesex is a case of such invasion.”



When the passions cease to be interested, a conclusion is often without difficulty arrived at, which is in vain sought for, whilst they are alive and at work. They are busy artists, and throw, with intellectual prisms, the hue of inclination upon almost every object.

The *pour* and the *contre* of this question were doubtless agitated in its day with much and equal sincerity by many. With many it still, possibly, continues to be a question of intricacy. But as the great *British* Statesman \* asserted to his constituents, with rela-

\* The recollection, that the great statesman alluded to *thought* in early life of this measure as the ministers of the day *acted*, ought to be an antidote to the vanity, which would tempt any of us to treat with arrogance those who hold opinions adverse to our own. He then was only beginning to think, or at the least had not learnt to think *alone*. Whilst he, however, was Secretary of State, was this resolution expunged from the Journals.

tion to the necessity of the late war, that it admitted of an easier and more positive decision than questions of a similar nature usually did: so, certainly, it appears to me, that "the Middlesex case" is of a far less dubitable nature than it was accounted at the time. It was by the Charter, the Great Charter of our Liberties, clearly settled, "that no freeman shall be disseised of his freehold, or liberties, or free customs, unless by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land." It is also settled, by the decision of our highest court of judicature, "that every man has a right to his freehold by the common law; and the law having annexed the right of voting to his freehold, it is of the nature of his freehold, and must depend upon it." "It is absurd to say, the electors' right of choosing is founded upon the law and custom

of Parliament. It is an original right, part of the constitution of the kingdom, as much as is Parliament, from whence the persons elected to serve in Parliament derive their authority, and can have no other but that which is given to them, by those that have the original right to choose them." The right of the electors to choose whom they please, is not indeed disputed; but it is said, they can only choose those who are legally capable of being chosen, and that an expelled member by the law of Parliament, which is the law of the land, is incapable of being elected into the same Parliament.

The precedents on the Journals opposed each other. In 1698 a Mr. Wollaston was expelled, re-elected, and admitted to take his seat in the same sessions. Only thirteen years after, Mr. Walpole "having been this session of

Parliament committed a prisoner to the Tower of London, and expelled this House for an high breach of trust in the execution of his office, and notorious corruption when Secretary at War," was voted "to have been and to be incapable of being elected a member to serve in the present Parliament."

It is remarkable, that the resolution which seated Mr. Luttrell agreed in form with neither of the cited precedents. Both those resolutions not only mentioned the expulsion, but also mentioned its cause. The vote that excluded Mr. Wilkes, upon all the returns, assigned as the *sole* cause of his incapacity his expulsion, shutting out *intentionally* from the consideration of the electors, whether such expulsion was founded upon reasonable grounds or not. Nor was this the only point in which the resolution differed from the precedents,

upon which it was said to be built. Mr. Walpole being returned a second time, and having a majority of votes, was adjudged incapable; but his opponent was not seated—the election was declared void. Mr. Luttrell, on the contrary, was received at once as the legal representative. Even according to their own construction of the law of Parliament, the majority acted irregularly. But surely it may justly be doubted, whether a practice (that of considering expulsion as virtually the same with incapacitation) of so late a date as this in question, were it even more clear and undoubted than it really is; so long subsequent also to the establishment of those laws by which the freeholders sustained their right, ought in justice to control or supersede that right? Surely it was rashness to conclude, because the borough of Lynn acquiesced in the ex-

clusion of Mr. Walpole, the House of Commons assigning a most striking cause for their conduct, and sending back to the burgesses the member, to whom a minority of votes had been given, either to be rejected or re-chosen as the electors thought fit—that therefore the county of Middlesex was bound to acquiesce in the exclusion of him whom they had re-elected, no reason being given to them for his rejection but that he had been expelled—and that Mr. Luttrell should represent them without further appeal to their desires. Whether it be not fit to allow the House the power of expulsion, for flagrant offences, in the first instance, is not contested. The sending the member back to his constituents on such ground might be deemed a proper appeal to them; and it is not likely that the

constituents would *often* differ, were the cause of expulsion assigned, from the judgment of those who appealed to them. If they persevered in so doing, their perseverance ought either to be submitted to (for in them is lodged the choice) ; or should the object be indeed so important, the incapacity should be made an act of the legislature at large. If the resolution now stood on the Journals, a *discretionary* power of disabling whom they would, would at this day be vested in the House. For any offence, political or moral, a majority might expel, and a member once expelled would instantly be thrown aside from public service into the obscure Siberian desert of inactivity ; a dreary region “ unquam unde redire negatur ” till a seven years penance should have expiated his ~~arbitrary~~ imputed sins ;

“ Till the foul crimes, done in his days of nature,  
Are burnt and purg’d away.”

“ His demum exactis, perfecto temporis orbe,  
Devenere locos lactos, et amœna vireta  
Fortunatorum nemorum, sedesque beatas.”

But it perhaps might be feared, that although within the guarded pale of this new elysium of purity and innocence, the “*pii vates*,”

“ *Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo—*”

the bestowers of gifts and favours, might still be found ; yet that the free band “*qui ob patriam pugnando vulnera passi*,” as well as the “*casti sacerdotes*,” would be banished to “another air.”

The essence of a free government is, that impunity, if not reward, should be secured to the display of free thought and free action, as long as they are displayed within the rule and limit of



*declared* and *known* law. Surely Burke has said wisely, that the power, which in its exercise bows to no rule but its own discretion, *must* be beyond the just claims of a final judicature. “Not one of their abettors has ever undertaken to assign the principle of unfitness, the species or degrees of delinquency, on which the House of Commons will expel, nor the mode of proceeding upon it, nor the evidence upon which it is established: the direct consequence of which is, that the first franchise of an Englishman, and that on which all the rest vitally depend, is to be forfeited for some offence which no man knows, and which is to be proved by no known rule whatsoever of legal evidence. This is so anomalous to our whole constitution, that I will venture to say, the most trivial right which the subject claims never

was nor can be forfeited in such a manner."

It may be incidentally observed, that Mr. Justice Blackstone, in his review of this important question, takes it for granted, that not only is a clergyman incapable of sitting in Parliament, but that no precedent of such a circumstance could be produced. It is now known, from a late investigation, that such precedents certainly exist. So difficult is it for the most learned to avoid error, unless they have purposely and expressly examined each individual point upon which they are led to touch.

It were perhaps an excess of refinement to suppose that Mr. Wilkes, when he returned from France, foresaw the conduct which would be adopted towards him, and knew the serious discussion which would arise from it. Yet,

in an address to the Liverymen of London after the poll for the City had finally closed, he tells them " that *his friends* were of opinion that he should wait the dissolution of the last slavish and venal Parliament before he commenced his exertions," Is it thence to be concluded, that before this period, whilst also under a sentence of expulsion, he had revolved the step which he afterwards took ? However that may be, he undoubtedly did wisely in making the contest, rather between the House and a county like that of Middlesex, than with the borough of Aylesbury, or a place of inferior note. Not only did he acquire the advantage of numbers ; but the imagination also, with respect to the trespass committed upon popular right, was necessarily more excited. I know not, however, that in an instance where the franchises of fewer electors had been in-

volved, the sentiment of the House of Commons would have been at all more readily or more unanimously fixed; for certainly one main and avowed object of the measure was to impress the governed with awe. It is even possible, if the incapacitation had related to the case of a member returned for a close borough (for instance, Sarum), as the ideas of property and possession would have been more strikingly intrinsic to the case, the majority would have hesitated at the act which it was meditating. Divided amongst numbers, the share of each (considered as a question of property) appeared so trivial, that the mind was easily led to suppose that, in taking it away, it scarcely committed wrong. A confused notion of the high power and dignity of the House, assisted by the hasty adoption of the known law (which,

in cases of *clear* incapacity established by the *Legislature* at large, determined the votes given to an ineligible candidate, to be absolutely null and void), might easily occasion, without gross depravity or corruption, the decision to which a heated majority unadvisedly came. If, however, the maxim be true in politics as it is in morals, that where the nature of an act is doubtful (if there be no paramount necessity, no *salus publica* requiring it), it is moral not to do it; it is impossible to acquit of *rashness* at least, the course pursued in this transaction. For, was the conquest of Mr. Wilkes really necessary to the safety and existence of the Government? There was little honour to be gained by victory, but much to be lost by defeat. The government of a great kingdom at war with a private individual! To Mr.

Wilkes most truly "non tam turpe fuit vinci quam contendisse decorum est."

Few events have been attended with more signal and extended consequences than this. The reasonings used in relation to it, and the sentiments naturally awakened by and flowing from those reasonings, are asserted to have occasioned the American war. Certain it is, that the arguments by which the justice of that war was impugned, derived much of their force with the public from the freedom with which the right of representation and its supposed consequences had previously been canvassed. And if it be true also that the French Revolution is the offspring of the contention with our brethren of the western continent, the case of the Middlesex election becomes of still greater

import. It perhaps, therefore, will not be thought to have occupied too much space in this trifling memoir; though it may well be thought to deserve an investigation more profound than either time or his present opportunities of thought and information will now allow its writer to give it, even were his powers proportioned to his inclination. The case of the Middlesex election may be considered as the little speck seen in the horizon \*. In the American dispute it became the cloud, at first no bigger than a man's hand, but hourly enlarging and overspreading the hemisphere, till, in the Revolution of France, it burst forth in destroying torrents. To the latter, indeed, it is peculiar that on the part of the people it was a struggle of aggression. However pure the inten-

\* See an eloquent Sermon of Dr. Watson, now Bishop of Llandaff.

tion of its early leaders, it must still be owned that no new grievance, no yoke unimposed before, aroused the spirit of opposition. In the latter instance, morality *might* have hesitated and drawn back; whilst, in the two former, nature and morality both might reasonably seem, *in due measure*, to command resistance.

To the vote of the 17th of February 1769, wisely and fortunately no resistance was made but the resistance of logic and complaint; the murmur was loud and long, but vented itself in the legal mode permitted and justified by the constitution. The petitions presented to Parliament were, by Lord Chatham, styled honourable and manly; by the partizans of Ministers seditious, by some of them even treasonable.

Petitions were succeeded by remonstrances, some of which were composed



in language sufficiently intemperate : but the flame, which Ministers had incautiously raised, they possessed not the courage to extinguish. They believed, probably, it would of itself in time consume and die away : they stood therefore wholly on the defensive, rejecting the propositions made in Parliament to rescind the resolution, but carefully avoiding to punish those, without doors, who complained, however rudely, of its injustice. Mr. Wilkes in the meanwhile, within the walls of the King's Bench prison, continued to pass a not inglorious confinement. From the time of his first election for Middlesex in March 1768, through the whole of the year 1769, and even far into 1772, he was the sole unrivalled political idol of the people, who lavished upon him all in their power to bestow, as if willing to prove that in England it *was* possible

for an individual to be great and important through *them alone*. A subscription was opened for the payment of his debts, and 20,000*l.* are said in a few weeks to have been raised for that purpose, and for the discharging his fine. The Society for the support of the Bill of Rights presented him with 300*l.* Gifts of plate, of wine, of household goods, were daily heaped upon him. An unknown patriot conveyed to him in a handsomely embroidered purse five hundred guineas. An honest chandler enriched him with a box containing of candles, the magic number of dozens, forty-five. High and low contended with each other who most should serve and celebrate him. Devices and emblems of all descriptions ornamented the trinkets conveyed to his prison: the most usual was the Cap of Liberty placed over his crest: upon others was

a bird with expanded wings, hovering over a cage, beneath a motto, "I love liberty." Every wall bore his name, and every window his portrait. In china, in bronze, or in marble, he stood upon the chimney-piece of half the houses of the metropolis: he swung upon the sign-post of every village, of every great road throughout the country. He was accustomed himself to tell with much glee of a monarchical old lady, behind whom he accidentally walked—looking up, she murmured, within his hearing, in much spleen, "He swings everywhere but where he ought:" he passed her, and, turning round, politely bowed. But the voice of disapprobation, whether of old women or of young, of men or of youths, was the voice of one amidst a thousand. The most grateful of all harmony, says Balzac, arises from the dissenting voice of a single individual,

when mixed in the general concert of public applause: the appetite for popularity is not often distinguishing; it loves to number rather than select.

“ Praise from the rivell'd lips of toothless, bald  
Decrepitude; and in the looks of lean  
And craving poverty; and in the bow  
Respectful of the smutch'd artificer;  
Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb  
The bias of the purpose.”

What wonder then, if, accompanied by the praise also of the splendid, the polished, and the wealthy, it *invigorate* and *confirm* the purpose?

Amongst the public bodies that testified their approbation of his spirit, the city of London took the lead. As early as the 2d of January 1769, he was elected alderman of the ward of Faringdon Without: by a mistake in closing the poll-books the election however was pronounced void; but on the 27th of

the same month he was declared duly elected.

In November 1769, he brought his action against Lord Halifax, for false imprisonment and the seizure of his papers : he obtained a verdict of 4000*l*. On the 17th of April 1770, he was discharged from his imprisonment. On the 24th he was sworn as alderman.

In 1771 he seized the advantage afforded by his magisterial situation to make reprisals on the House of Commons. A messenger having orders from the House to command the attendance of a printer (against whom complaint was made that, contrary to the privileges of Parliament, he had published the Debates of the House), attempted in vain to execute what was required.

After several fruitless visitations, the Serjeant at Arms reported that the printer was not to be met with. An address

to the Sovereign was drawn up, in pursuance of which a proclamation was issued, offering for the apprehension of the printer a considerable reward. He was apprehended, and the reward claimed. Mr. Alderman Wilkes discharged him, as apprehended under an illegal warrant, and bound over the printer to prosecute the party apprehending him for an assault. He at the same time wrote a letter to Lord Halifax, the Secretary of State, acquainting him with what had been done. The same conduct was adopted by Mr. Alderman Oliver, and the Lord Mayor, Brass Crosby, with relation to other parties similarly situated: nor did they stop here; in one instance the magistrates of the city not only discharged the person against whom the House of Commons had directed their orders, but, as their joint act, committed the messenger

who endeavoured to put them in force: The Commons, fired at this contempt of their authority, proceeded to command the attendance of the magistrates. The Lord Mayor and Mr. Alderman Oliver, as Members of the House, attended in their places, and justified the part which they had acted. They were committed to the Tower, and though brought up by Habeas Corpus to the Court of Common Pleas, where their case was argued at length, were remanded thither, and continued there till the close of the sessions. Their being, however, as members, within the jurisdiction of the House, was not applicable to Mr. Wilkes. In a letter to the Speaker, he peremptorily refused to comply with the order of attendance, except as Representative of the county of Middlesex. The order was renewed, and renewed again, but it was not obeyed.

At length he was ordered to be present on the 8th of April, and an adjournment was then made to the 9th: and thus, to use the words of Junius, "by this mean, pitiful evasion" was the point given up. The wretchedness of this shift became still more apparent from the House having previously erased out of the Guildhall Rota Book an entry taken by the magistrates of their examination of the printer, for answering of whose charge they bound over the messenger to give security. These minutes were at the command of the House expunged by the Lord Mayor's clerk at the Speaker's table.

If the power of the Commons in Parliament was such as to justify this interposition, it seemed to follow as a necessary consequence, that it was such as to justify the commitment of Mr. Wilkes, who with his colleagues had



signed the minutes. If their jurisdiction were circumscribed, and extended only to that, which was immediately a part of their body, it became difficult to say, what control they possessed over the judicial papers of the city magistracy. Lord Chatham, in the House of Peers, denominated this interference the act, not of a Parliament, but of a mob : and the metropolis at the time approved so much of the conduct of their magisterial officers, that at a Court of Common Council thanks were voted to them, for having supported the privileges and franchises of the City, and having so firmly defended the British constitution. Mr. Wilkes triumphantly observed, that it was now evident the House " had had enough of him." His victory was decisive, and all that a well-wisher to the country could regret was, that it was a victory gained over the

elected representatives of the nation, and that those representatives had, in part, merited their defeat.

From this period, Mr. Wilkes's career was a course of good fortune. On the 3d of July 1771, he was chosen Sheriff; in October 1774, he was elected Lord Mayor; and, Parliament being suddenly dissolved in its sixth session, he was elected one of the new representatives of Middlesex, and took his seat unmolested in the December of the same year. He had during the whole of the last Parliament publicly termed himself the real and legal representative of that county: its sheriffs too had, at two distinct calls of the House, returned him as such. In 1774 he actually attended to be sworn, but the tender of the oath was refused, without a certificate from the Clerk of the Crown; which, naturally enough, was

refused also. His election secure, he had now the privilege of calling names," and the still more important privilege of pressing upon the House, in person, an oft repeated motion for rescinding the resolution of 1769. This for several years was not accompanied with complete success, though it was, at almost each attempt, attended with an augmentation in number of those who voted with him. In April 1775, he presented, as Lord Mayor, a remonstrance to the Sovereign, from the city of London; and, in July, a petition: both of them relating, not to his own peculiar case, but to the state of public affairs: both, however, hostile to the conduct of Ministers. Having several times stood candidate for the Chamberlainship of London, against Alderman Hopkins, he, in 1779, upon the death of his opponent, obtained that, not dishonour-

able, and very lucrative, office. He obtained it by a most decided majority, and held it, without interruption, for life. Amid these more substantial benefits, it is scarcely worth relating that a Mr. Temple left him, by will, 300*l*. “for his strenuous endeavours in the cause of freedom, and his noble defence of the constitution against a series of despots and wicked ministers;” and that the City of London presented him with a valuable silver cup, embossed with the death of Cæsar in the Capitol.

In 1782, upon the dismissal from office of the ministers who conducted the war against America, the obnoxious resolution was, at length, upon his own motion, expunged from the Journals. This was the crown of those political labours, which more immediately concerned his own personal actions. He thenceforward deemed himself “a fire burnt

out."—Such are the main and more important incidents of the life of John Wilkes, a man, about whom, even were it unwilling, posterity necessarily must make inquiries ; since the circumstances of his life are interwoven with the history of his time, and with the history of the constitution of his country.—His after-life was passed in the punctual and faithful discharge of the duties attached to his office of Chamberlain ; in a temperate attention, as a senator, to national affairs and the proceedings of Parliament ; and in the cultivation of letters and the fine arts. As treasurer of the City of London (such is the Chamberlain) his accounts were kept with exactness, and his personal attendance was most regular. No officer subordinate to him, no person in any way concerned with his office, ever had occasion to wait one moment beyond the appointed time

of daily business. Though careless of expenditure, he was yet tenacious of the accustomed rights and advantages of his situation: like Swift, he usually took care to be in the right, and, knowing himself to be so, was not to be driven from his demands. On the whole, however, he was a rare and fortunate example of a man in place and power, who still preserved popularity, amongst those from whom he derived them. To the very last, the metropolis retained, and even now continues to retain, numerous staunch "Wilkites." Both as Chamberlain and Alderman he is spoken of with much respect. As the latter, in the riots of 1780, he, first and almost alone, of the city magistrates, acted, with firmness and celerity. He received for his useful services at that period the thanks of the Privy Council; of the

King's Privy Council, in the year 1780 !  
Such is England.

In Parliament, having steadily opposed through all its stages the fatal war with America, he maintained against those who supported it, his opposition, even when the war, the cause of that opposition, was at an end. He supported the peace of 1783 ; a peace inadequate to the hopes and wishes of the nation ; the terms of which, however, if not accepted, could only have been avoided by a new appeal to the sword. What Dr. Franklin since said is now well known ; that he, and he believed most other statesmen of influence in America, would have advised and pressed for continued war, had the boundary ceded to the United States been seriously contested, or had the article relative to the abandonment of the Loyalists

been rejected. — From his situation in the city, or from respect to Mr. Hastings (the latter, a feeling, though wholly unconnected with the wisdom of the measure, at present common to most men of understanding), Mr. Wilkes strenuously opposed Mr. Fox's East India bill. His opposition could scarcely be supposed to flow from any dread of diminishing the influence of the Crown; nor, indeed, in his speech to the House, does he touch upon any such topic. During the debates on the Regency Bill he was wholly neuter. Of the war with France, though then not in Parliament, he, at least at its commencement, disapproved. Upon other questions, he supported that side which he naturally might be expected to support. For a more fair and equal representation of the people in Parliament, he moved himself; and he voted affirmatively



upon all similar propositions. He spoke more than once against the interference of Peers in elections. The Bill for the relief of Protestant Dissenting Ministers, as well as that for the relief of Roman Catholics, met with his warm concurrence. Having, however, none but mere personal interest, and being wholly unconnected with either of the great parties which in the beginning of the year 1790 filled the opposite benches of the House of Commons, he, upon the dissolution of Parliament, felt the hazard of risking an election too great, and prudently declined standing as a candidate. Though advanced in years, he shewed no decay of intellect. His short congratulatory addresses spoken as Chamberlain to those public characters, who received between 1790 and 1797 (the year of his death) the freedom of the city, were his last public exertions.

That to Vice-admiral Waldegrave was delivered on the 5th of December, not many days before he expired. He died on the 26th, aged seventy. He was interred in Grosvenor Chapel, South Audley Street. According to the directions of his will, eight labouring men, dressed in new mourning, bore his coffin from the door of the chapel to the vault. The bearers, by his will, received, in addition to their clothes, a guinea each. A tablet, its inscription written by himself, has this memorial :

The Remains  
of  
JOHN WILKES,  
a Friend to Liberty ;  
Born at London, Oct. 17, 1727, O. S.  
Died in this Parish.

Mr. Wilkes left behind him a daughter, Mary, the offspring of his marriage

with Miss Mead. Miss Wilkes survived her father but a few years—she died the 12th of March 1802, aged fifty-one.

Mr. Wilkes has also other, surviving, children ; a daughter, Harriet ; and a son, opulently and respectably situated in India. The latter of these did not take his name. Mr. Wilkes has one brother and a sister yet living.

Mr. Wilkes, in no great while after their marriage, separated from his wife. When it is recollected how and with whom, about that period, he was beginning to associate, it is reasonable to conclude, that in their domestic disagreement he was himself not without blame. He himself, in his letter on his own public conduct, November 1768, expresses a hope that his political virtue may atone “ for the dissipation of too gay a youth.” I am afraid that this dissipation scarcely can claim, with

fairness, the indulgence given to youth. His period of riot was certainly not closed (if then) *before* the year 1764—a time when, as he was thirty-six years of age, one should have thought a man of reflection would have made up his opinions, and a man of resolution would at least be beginning to act in conformity to them. The apology in truth cannot be considered as a very sincere one. Its meaning, if it had any meaning, was probably to diminish, by boldly admitting its truth, the effect of the accusation. He was indeed not much of a hypocrite, nor very scrupulous about a frank avowal both of his actions and opinions. Whether, however, had he not been forced into it, he would willingly have made the latter as public, as they at last became, may be justly questioned. Asserting the freedom of thought, he yet himself admits, that

not only the laws of good breeding, but the laws of society, are infringed when an attack is made on what any community has decreed to be sacred. But when the Essay on Woman was in open day brought forward against him, he possibly felt there was no retreat; and was therefore very willing to attribute that to deliberate conviction, which, perhaps, was in fact nothing more than a mere riotous ebullition; a sentiment not founded upon presumed knowledge or previous consideration, but taken up at random, to be, in a soberer hour, dismissed for ever. Those opinions, the adoption of which was at first accidental, he who has once published them often makes it a point of vanity to maintain. Wilkes wished it to be supposed that with him it was something more than this. In the Collection of Letters, already mentioned as

published in 1769, appears a letter from the pious Baxter, author of "An Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul, called Matho." Baxter there addresses him as a man "of whom all good men conceive great hopes." In another letter he writes thus: "In the mean time I shall publish an Appendix to the Enquiry, which you must give me leave to inscribe to you in the following manner: Sir, the subject of our conversation in the Capuchins' garden, at Spa, in the summer of 1745, is still by me in the dress it was put in. I have no leisure at present to prepare it for the public view. In the interim I send you the following sheets as a token of my sincere respect—it is a pleasure to think on the time we spent so agreeably together." The Appendix was afterwards published with the proposed dedication. That the conversa-

tion which a man serious and devout like Baxter, found so agreeable, was necessarily conducted with moderation and sobriety, we may reasonably conclude. But to draw the conclusion desired by Mr. Wilkes, would, I think, be hazardous. I am at a loss to assign any motive for his inserting this letter in the Collection, unless it were to shew that whatsoever his practice and opinions might be since, he had once thought in a more serious way, and that it was not without due consideration he had adopted his later notions. Some doubt nevertheless with regard to his determination of a question, as profound as that about which he argued, may not improperly be entertained; of his capability, at the time when he conversed; of his inclination, afterwards. It is usually praise enough at eighteen to be *inclined* to examine a subject of this nature; the

reputation of enlarging our acquaintance with it may readily be resigned, without any degradation of intellect. That in more advanced age he was sufficiently averse to great severity of intellectual application, is well known. Unless therefore that occurred to him, which seldom is found from experience to occur to others, it is not easy to acquiesce in the conclusion, to which by implication he would lead us, that his habits of temperance and of attention to the received maxims by which social life is regulated, were altered and thrown aside, because that system which best sanctions and enforces them seemed to him so false as to oblige him to discard it. Licentious practice has often rendered that plausible to the mind, which might otherwise have appeared at once of enormous absurdity ; but it has seldom happened that the exertion of



thought, whithersoever it has led in argument, has seduced him who has used it, into any peculiar laxity of manners. Hobbes, Bayle, and Hume, whatsoever be the judgment passed upon their speculative principles, were men of lives regular and irreproachable.

Of mankind the greater part necessarily think "upon trust." Even of the cultivated, the greater number do little more than combine into something having a semblance of coherence the impressions made upon them. Opinions thrown into our minds unsought, or instilled into them by education, are met and counteracted by contrary opinions, acquired, with little on our part of exertion, in a similar way with their antagonist opinions. The education of the cloister is crossed by the education of the world. Two classes of ideas spring up, between which the maturer

judgment is at length solicted to choose ; but often does little more than lend an ear of inclination to the one, wholly negligent of the other. The conduct resulting from the aggregate impression of the favoured class bears frequently an air of system ; yet, if narrowly dissected, would be found to be the consequence of frequent recurrence, rather than of choice, of study or arrangement.

Even without referring to the high ordinance which commands them, the duties of morality arise so evidently from the situation in which man is placed upon earth, that it is difficult for a man of reason to avoid falling into the observance of them, even did he unfortunately hold himself not *bound* to their performance. And if the argument be just, which teaches us that they are received in common only because they have been found from invariable experience to be most conducive to general

welfare, and because most conducive to general welfare have, therefore, been commanded, it will seem still more natural that the man of reasoning powers should without difficulty adapt himself to them. It is the man of blind impulse, of mere passion, therefore (if of cultivated understanding, yet of understanding cultivated in one direction only), who is most likely to disregard them ; but who is likely enough also to demand the praise due only to intellect of a higher standard. Taking therefore from Mr. Wilkes the credit of having formed his "bundle of opinions" with any very assiduous care or anxious diligence, I am willing to think myself, that the mode in which they were at length bound up was rather accidental than designed. It is a trait, however, of human nature not unworthy of observation, that he, who in one part of a

volume relates the rites of Medmenham, should, to increase his fame, insert in the same volume the letter of Baxter!—How to increase his fame he in general, indeed, knew well; it has been truly said, that he possessed the rare talent of writing to and for the people. And it must be owned too that he knew well also what in action was likely to enchant the multitude. His undaunted gaiety, his decided courage, his unflagging spirit; the Lothario-like abandonment with which he smiled at gravity, and sneered at chastity; the Epicurean confidence, with which, for instance, he makes it a reproach to Chatham, that to the cultivation of that eloquence, which was to shake senates and govern kingdoms, he sacrificed the joys of beauty and of wine \*—all were so displayed as aptly to allure and captivate the popular

\* See page 60.

imagination. The growth of a character like this is usually spontaneous: with strong desires impatient of controlment, it generally shews itself early, and, gaining strength from indulgence, at last braves every prudential restraint. The early irregularities of Voltaire led naturally to the philosophy which he afterwards taught. With Wilkes it seems to have been otherwise. But I suspect that the fame of Voltaire, then rising to its meridian, considerably influenced the mind of his disciple\*. The sect of Voltaire was at that period extending far and wide. It was deemed an escape from prejudice to deride the maxims upon which virtuous and domestic life was conducted. And as nothing is more servilely imitative than the conduct which springs from the vain desire of being thought superior to

\* See Vol. iv. Letter xxxii.

vulgar notions, so certainly the pupils of sensuality in England failed not with most unoriginal exactness to tread in the track of their master. Thinking ill of the tenets of this academy, as having no reference to any future state of existence, and being little applicable to, and very insufficiently calculated to ameliorate, the present, it yet would be unjust to deny that its doctrine of general benevolence (though a borrowed one) demands our praise; and that many of its professors sanctioned the doctrine by their practice. If Mr. Wilkes adopted its errors, he also adopted its virtue. The voice of friendship is not always to be believed; but Churchill did not lie, when he attributed to him

“ A heart to pity, and a hand to bless.”

The records of his charity and of his liberality are not few. The editor of

the Letters, which constitute the volumes to which this memoir is prefixed, has asserted, that of gaming and intoxication he was guiltless. I believe with regard to the former, the position is true; but I can hardly be persuaded that, in the season of his jollity at least, he was "a Bacchanal without wine," or that passing whole sleepless nights in festival, he yet was so guarded as never to crown the cup once too much. In relation to the latter period of his life, the remark, however, unquestionably is just. His talent for conversation was greatly celebrated, yet not beyond its merit. Even Johnson owned, that he was instructed and entertained, and "had one not heard of Jack Wilkes there, and Jack Wilkes here, and that in convivial pleasantries no one was like him, I should have thought still more of it." His stories were numerous and select,

and uncommon ; well introduced and aptly pointed. It was in fact a portion of his studies : he possessed a richer collection of printed Anas than most men, even of those who, like himself, applied to the perusal of them with earnestness. His acquaintance were passionate in partiality towards him ; but he in turn quarrelled with almost every friend he had. He was little obedient to advice, even though coming from those to whom it was most his interest to hearken, and who most were anxious, disinterestedly anxious, about his welfare. Upon the first publication of No. 45 of the North Briton, there was a want of evidence to bring home to him either the writing or publication. The death-warrant of general warrants was signed ; Lord Temple therefore pressed him to step no further. He had engaged, however, to furnish his friends



in the city with an edition from his own press : the subscription was large, and the amount of it was likely to be beneficial to him. The loss of this Lord Temple readily undertook to compensate ; but Mr. Wilkes refused to draw back : he edited his new edition, and was convicted of the re-publication. From his friends in the City (they, who in the Middlesex contest most warmly supported him) he became entirely estranged. Alderman Sawbridge, with Mr. Townsend, though both strangers to him, proposed and seconded his re-election for that county. With Beckford, Oliver, and Bull, he was intimately united : from all these, however, he eventually separated. He did not always conceal sufficiently his opinion of his own abilities, nor the contempt in which he sometimes unjustly held the ability of others : it is affirmed he was

often but too prodigal of wit, and upon all occasions would lose a friend rather than a jest. His controversy with Mr. Horne (now Mr. Tooke) is well known. Mr. Horne, at Mr. Wilkes's political outset, was of signal service to him. Of his friend Churchill, however, Mr. Wilkes retained the most affectionate remembrance to the very last. Churchill died before any difference of opinion could well arise between them; they were otherwise, I fear, of spirits too irritable and inflammable to have remained long unkindled. Mr. Wilkes, at his cottage in the Isle of Wight, erected to him a cenotaph, the inscription of which has been often quoted :

CAROLO CHURCHILL,  
 Divino Poetæ,  
 Amico jucundo,  
 Civi optime de Patriâ merito.

Churchill, almost worshipped in his lifetime, has since been somewhat neglected; but his reputation for genius is now budding anew. The temporary subject of most of his compositions, the excess of praise, so lavished upon him, that he, like Voltaire, might be said to be smothered with roses; the rapid blaze in which he consumed away his powers; and his morals, little congenial to the sympathies of his countrymen, created for some years a disinclination to do him justice. There have never been wanting *some*, however, who have not hesitated to speak of him as he deserved; and it is indeed a sorry compliment paid to Virtue to deny her rival that which justly is her due, lest she should become too amiable. Whatever be the blandishments and gifts of Vice, it would ill beseem the majesty of Virtue to shrink from the dazzle of her charms,

however captivating. The Roman matron, in the presence of the luxurious Egyptian, felt surely something very different from humiliation. Who is he, who, from respect to Cornelia, would think it necessary to disown the beauty of Thais? Cowper, in the admirable letter in which he dwells upon the powers of Churchill, has blamed, with propriety, the coldness of his biographer. And if the pious Cowper deemed it culpable to withhold the praise deserved, surely no *moral* blame can attach to any other who bestows the praise he believes to be due, whosoever be the object on whom it is conferred.

“ Politics are transitory, wit is eternal.” The writings of Mr. Wilkes are chiefly political, and have of late, therefore, been little read. I cannot, however, but think, that the impression left upon the public mind is less favourable to him

as a man of literary skill and lively imagination than it ought to be. His reputation indeed has suffered under the same inconveniences which obscured the fame of his friend. In some respects Wilkes is more unlucky than Churchill: however much many cotemporary poets excelled the latter in polish and regularity, no one of his day possessed more of warmth and energy. The former was opposed to candidates for reputation of talents, such as centuries may pass away and fail again to exhibit. The style of Junius has embalmed his writings, and rendered them imperishable. But though surpassed, it should be recollected by whom as a writer of politics Mr. Wilkes is surpassed: to Junius, to Burke, and to Johnson, he may perhaps be inferior, and yet have a claim to distinction. Who of them best has attained truth, the just end of all writing,

whether moral, poetical, or political, it may perhaps be difficult to say : in politics, generally speaking, that is truth which our judgment leads us to deem so. The Tory will naturally think that the truth is with Johnson ; the Whig, that it is with Burke. Of particular events and individual measures, it is easy, when the period of passion and interest is over, to speak with precision : of fundamental maxims and abstract positions of government, it is not equally safe or easy to pronounce : since both may, to a certain degree, involve in them truth, and the doubt will usually be as to the propriety of their application. In ornament of style and elegance of composition, mankind, however, are sufficiently agreed. Be the bias of our political opinions as it may, there will probably be little difference in our sentiments of the literary merit of the " Free-

holder" and the "Examiner," the "Rolliad" and the "Anti-Jacobin." The spirit of Mr. W.'s political papers is considerable: his style is not impassioned, but it has sprightliness, fertility of allusion, aptness of quotation, and terseness of phrase: it has also a careless air of anglicism, which is not displeasing, and which he much affected. His irony is playful, and sometimes poignant; and through all his writings there is a vein of curious knowledge such as a man of pleasure would not naturally be expected to possess. His volumes, published under his own direction, are well "got up" to produce effect. The collection of papers relative to his case, published 1767, at Paris, I have not seen. The volume, printed, with his portrait prefixed, at Berlin, contains a letter from Diderot,

congratulating him upon his election for Middlesex. In the true style of French compliment he is preferred to Coriolanus. Many names one should have thought would have been joined before those of Coriolanus and Wilkes, whether in resemblance or contrast. But "Coriolanus sought to enslave his country, Wilkes to redeem the liberties of his." Diderot was in the enjoyment of much reputation on the continent, and his name at Berlin told well. This letter is not in the English collection of 1769. In the latter volume are frequent references to a second volume, which however never appeared. Mr. Wilkes meditated the publication of several letters from Mr. Pitt, Mr. Onslow, Voltaire, &c.: considering them, however, as written confidentially, he, upon reflection, thought it dishonourable to



send them to the press \*. The published volume is, however, managed with adroitness. The letter of Baxter has already been noticed. A letter of Mr. Legge, upon the subject of finance, is given ; together with letters of Smollett, and of Brewster, the translator of Persius. As these have no connexion with, or relation to, any of the political transactions in which he bore so great a share, they can only be meant as ornamental, and as evidence of his having early been in habits of intimacy with the lovers of literature.

In his letter on his own public conduct, he displays a confident per-

\* Lord Talbot, upon the supposition that Lord Temple had given to the press Mr. W.'s letter, relating the circumstances of their duel, was greatly enraged with that nobleman. Mr. Wilkes himself was really the person who published it ; he afterwards a little regretted he had done so, but he could not withdraw it.

suasion of the authority which he possessed at the time over the multitude ; and makes a merit of the moderation with which he submitted to the laws of his country. The decree of exile against Cicero was reversed upon a point of form :— he considers his own outlawry as similar, but insists that the true reason of its reversal was the political timidity of his adversaries.

Mr. Grenville published in 1769, the speech made by him in February, in the House of Commons, on the motion for Mr. Wilkes's expulsion. The speech was replied to immediately by Mr. W. in a letter addressed to its author. The polished style of this, Mr. Grenville's " only Ciceronian oration," is attributed to the forming hands of a new friend, on whom nature had lavished all the powers of the sublime and beautiful. He sneers at the Grenvillian

family compact, and attached as he unfeignedly was to Lord Temple, yet cannot forbear to attack the reconciliation of Lord Chatham and his Lordship. "The Grenville family have indeed been too much like a Scottish family for many years: if one brother has at any time been quite right, another has always been as wrong, for he has been diametrically opposite. If one has been violent in opposition, another has regularly kept the balance of power even by supporting every measure of Government, and filling some lucrative office:" the conduct of the family must be changed, "for both the court and the nation *domum timent ambiguum Tyriosque bilingues*." Lord Temple was much displeased with this publication.

The most serious literary effort of Mr. Wilkes was a proposed History of England; an Introduction to which he

published upon his return from France, in 1768. Whether he would have shewn, had he persevered in the execution of his design, that continued research and impartial judgment requisite in historical writing, may be doubted. The style of the body of the work would naturally, however, have taken a tone above the style of the Introduction, which, though lively, may yet be thought wanting in that regulated and sustained dignity, which, from the example of Greek and Roman authors, I cannot but think, in spite of a late criticism upon two of our own most admired writers, is congenial and essential to this species of composition. The Introduction is entertaining, and the anecdotes interspersed, are not ill brought together. This is his only work not absolutely called for by the passing political occasion; yet even this is said to have owed its origin to a de-

sire of drawing from its publication a pecuniary resource. The attempt was soon laid aside, and never again resumed. In 1769, his Letters and Speeches were collected in 3 vols. 12mo. In 1788, his Speeches were published by himself, in 1 vol. 8vo. His speeches were in fact prepared compositions; he did not possess the gift of extemporary speaking, nor was his delivery, though of course not improper, such as to give any force to what he had prepared. His best oration is a speech in defence of Mr. Hastings. The subject is a great one, and the defence contains much matter; but it has not, even considering it as written, the cadence of oratory\*; nor is the argument sufficiently expanded to produce that effect which ought to arise from an address meant for the ear. In the closet, if a passage is not under-

\* Est enim in dicendo quidam cantus obscurior.

stood, it is in our power again to turn to it. A passage lost in speaking is irrecoverable. The objection made to the supposed probability of Dr. Johnson's success as an orator, may well be made with justice to this harangue. Of men within my own experience, Macintosh is the only one who so could write and so utter a set speech as to produce the effect of a spontaneous effusion. The style of Wilkes is not enough declamatory. Mr. Wilkes piqued himself upon delicacy of literary taste \*: he censures both Sheridan and Burke for violating the decorum due to the dignity of an English Senate. "The urbanum, the elegans, the liberale," which Cicero strongly recommends, and Mr. Sheridan perfectly understands, "were sacrificed to party rancour." He condemns Burke for terming Benfield a criminal, who

\* See letter viii. p. 20, vol. iv.

long since “ought to have fattened the region kites with his offal;” “it is a savage Indian warfare, it places raillery in railing.” He has not always, however, preserved in his own writings this delicate propriety which he recommends to others. In a letter to Dr. Brocklesby, published in his own collection, he inquires “if the nasty, gummy, blubbery, overgrown boy of a lord, barbarous and blustering as the North, has received his orders also to denounce to the Commons, a laughable poem as a horrid crime?” There is not much of the urbanum, the elegans, the liberale in these expressions; and yet these, nevertheless, Mr. Wilkes well understood, and, to say truth, usually practised. The fascination of his manners is admitted by all who knew him: to this very nobleman he did justice at the very time he was opposing him. “I believe

the Noble Lord possesses perfect personal integrity. His own probity is unblemished; but a lust of power, and an unhappy indolence of temper, combined to make him, through the whole of the American war, connive at almost every man in every department, fleecing the public beyond the example of all former times. His own hands were clean: not so those of the whole tribe of his contractors and dependants. The Noble Lord has a rich vein of pure, elegant, classical wit, the most easy manners, and unaffected good nature, with every valuable and companionable quality. He is formed to be admired and beloved as a private nobleman: would to Heaven I could commend his reverence for the constitution, his love of liberty, and his zeal for the preservation of those noble franchises which are the birthright of Englishmen!" Mr. W. during his Lord-



ship's administration, attended the Westminster Committee of Association, in which the impeachment of Lord North was canvassed, and a petition to the House of Commons voted for that purpose.

Mr. Wilkes, as well as the companionable qualities ascribed to his Lordship, had also the classical elegance. His reading both of ancient and modern authors was extensive, not only beyond the opportunities of a busy and pleasurable life, but to a degree which justly entitled him to a rank amongst scholars. He was accustomed always to early rising; he read regularly and perseveringly; and was gifted with a most tenacious memory. He edited several writers, Busbequius, and others, of the middle ages. He edited also in 1790 the Characters of Theophrastus, and the Poems of Catullus. The latter I have never been

fortunate enough to see ; the text of the former seems to me to be clear and correct : in the opinion of a friend, upon whose judgment I can rely more safely than upon my own, it displays a much greater portion of critical skill than, from its unostentatious form (it is without notes), it appears to lay claim to.

He had made great progress in a translation of Anacreon \*, and was much pressed by his friend, Dr. J. Warton, to give it to the world. Nor was he less enriched with the treasures of modern literature : Italian he knew well, and with Spanish was not unacquainted. German was not in his day a literary language. In French, however, he might have contested the palm with Gibbon. If the historian challenged high praise for his “ *Memoire Justificatif*,” Mr.

\* See letter lxxiii. p. 201, vol. iv.

Wilkes was, perhaps, the Englishman, who best, had he exerted himself, could have rivalled that praise. In a periodical paper, called the Political Observer, he shewed himself not unwilling to try the hazard of the field. He inserted in it a critique upon Gibbon's work, which was afterwards printed separately, and named by him "A Supplement to the Miscellaneous Works of Mr. Gibbon." He denies the phrase "*La defence de l'Angleterre se trouve dans un etat*" to be French, and I learn that he is right. His intimate acquaintance with the literature of France a little, perhaps, tinctured his style. Classical as his taste was, he yet adopts, and frequently too, the turn of Voltaire. He had nevertheless a just love of Attic simplicity; and delighted to gratify that love by the composition of inscriptive memorials. His villa in the Isle of

Wight, the beauties of which have been often celebrated, amongst other graceful and happily selected ornaments, was adorned with several of these. His gratitude to the City was expressed thus :

Fortunæ reduci  
et  
Civitati Londinensi  
P.

JOHANNES WILKES, Quæstor,  
1789.

He had made a promise to returning Fortune whilst still in danger ; not, like Philip, when he vowed to erect the Escurial, from *fear*, but from *hope*. His letter on his public conduct concludes, “ Although he has suffered a long exile, and been broken on the wheel of fortune, yet being at last restored to the land of freedom, when all his cruel wounds are at length healed and for-

gotten, I expect that amongst his household deities he will erect a temple to Liberty, and dedicate an altar *Fortunæ reduci*." To Fortune he fulfilled his vow ; nor will any one feel inclined to censure him for having given to the goddess as a companion the Queen of Commerce : after all his hazards,

Hunc tabulâ sacer  
 Votivâ paries indicat uvida  
 Suspendisse *potenti*  
 Vestimenta *Maris Deo*.

To Liberty his sacrifice was of the heart.

Another tablet bore the following testimonial of the regard with which he cherished his daughter :

To Filial Piety  
 and  
 MARY WILKES ;  
 Erected by JOHN WILKES,  
 1789.

To shew that too much has not been said of Mr. Wilkes's character, as to the

degree in which he possessed the qualities assigned to him, I shall appeal to a judgment, which it may be thought at first somewhat singular \* I should be able to select. At a dinner at Mr. Strahan's in New Street, in March 1783, Mr. Wilkes's name being mentioned, Lord Mansfield gave his opinion in these words—that “ Mr. Wilkes was the pleasantest companion, the politest gentleman †, and the best scholar he knew.”

\* Copied from a written account given by Mr. A. Strahan, as follows : “ Mr. A. Strahan requests Mr. Wilkes will do him the favour to accept a print of his father ; and takes this opportunity of noticing the above anecdote, having minuted the words at the time. New Street, 13th May 1793.”

† How much his watchful politeness softened the spleen of Johnson, when they met at Dilly's, the bookseller, is told by Boswell. His companionable pleasantries, his “ *facetiae et lepores*,” are too numerous and almost too well known to be recited. A citizen at a chop-house stunned him by roaring

The praise of Lord Mansfield is the praise not only of a man capable of well appreciating what he praised ; but also of a political foe. " The Bishop of Worcester and Mr. Wilkes," writes Mr. W. from Bath, to his daughter, " are very well together, *to the great admiration of all blockheads !*"

Of music Mr. Wilkes understood nothing, nor was his ear naturally good ; but, as a connoisseur, with the sister art of painting he was well acquainted. He visited Italy at a period of life when his capacity for observation was at its height ; and his time therefore was not mispent.

for his steak. " Usually," said Mr. W. " the bear is brought to the stake ; here the steak is brought to the bear." Madame Pompadour addressed him in France at court thus: " You Englishmen are fine fellows ; how far may a man go in abuse of the royal family among you ?"—" I do not quite know, *but I am trying.*"

Sir J. Reynolds, with whom he was intimate, used at all times to profess much esteem for his critical skill. He did not possess many pictures, but his collection of prints was large, and admirably chosen. —His knowledge, his taste, and his polished elegance of manners, considerable as they were, are not however the merits upon which his public reputation rose. Through them he would indeed have been courted in private societies, but they alone would not have sounded his name through Europe. Though they necessarily added to its extent, yet they were rather the ornamental wings of the building, than the building itself. The character of his life is indeed singular. That men, born in the retirements of privacy, have, through the channel of political exertion, raised themselves to high distinction, has in it nothing surprising to Englishmen. It is the



course and practice and praise of their government. Lord Chatham is a pregnant instance; Burke and Sheridan still later examples. But *their* way was open and obvious. Possessing, in different measure, great abilities, and all of them possessing eloquence, they made the Senate the ground of their advancement, as it was the scene of their exhibition. Attaching themselves to high connexion, as their friends advanced in celebrity, they advanced with them. Their place in public opinion (not indeed an equal place) was gained by time, and labour, and progression. As the path they trod is in the straight and even road of civil society, it of course has many advantages, and also many facilities. The track of Mr. Wilkes was over precipices and through wilds; difficulty vanquished is *his* fame. His measures were his own measures, not the measures of a party;

his struggles were his own struggles ; his triumphs his own triumphs. Without " the talent of command " in popular assemblies, he yet so possessed himself of the popular mind, as, through it, to move a nation, and, without violence, to beat down the strength of a government, for years upon the stretch to ruin him. His motives were, I believe, public motives ; I know nothing that should make me think otherwise. He might be wrong, but, I am persuaded, he was sincere. His address to the burgesses of Berwick was his first public political act, and it is in unison with the sentiments which he afterwards professed. I see nothing in his philosophy, nor even in his mad pranks of indulgence, which should *force* me to suppose, that selfish motives *only* influenced his choice of the part which he performed. The mind of Gibbon, adopting the

same philosophical opinions, and taking the same view of human nature (however eloquent he sometimes may be found, *theoretically*, in praise of liberty), was yet surely not so framed as to risk much *practically* in its support. Hume, a man of yet colder feelings, making the same estimate of life, draws from it maxims of rule certainly not favourable to excess of freedom. A disposition to still acquiescence beneath the sway of greatness is, in truth, a more natural and usual result of a similar system of thought than any outrageous spirit of faction. In the tumultuous overthrow of an established government, spoil and place may indeed tempt cupidity and ambition. But, is it probable that Wilkes ever promised himself this? Were public affairs, when he commenced his race, in such a posture as to justify, even in a madman, so mad a hope? To do him justice, did

he himself encourage aught that distantly could lead to throw power into the hands of the many by the abolition of law? Between popular heat and anarchy the distance is wide. That his habits of pleasure had been different, is earnestly to be wished; not merely from the wish for general morality, but also from friendship to his name. Political actions are, above all others, so liable to misrepresentation, they excite necessarily so much opposing zeal, and draw down from that zeal so much obloquy; at the same time that the wisdom or folly, the virtue or vice of them are so little within the ken of the great mass of mankind; that to the politician, above all other men, is a life of blameless morality most useful. To how many would the patriotism of the Gracchi still be doubtful, if they could justly doubt their contempt of money, their temperance,

their private and domestic virtue, their humble piety? Even the gaiety of indulgence however is not *necessarily* connected with riotous insubordination of public principle; it is at least as likely to sink into base servility as to burst out into licentious faction. The gratification of appetite is far oftener secured by adulatory service, than rebellious contradiction, to power. They who conscientiously hold that government is at no time, and upon no occasion, to be opposed; or who, admitting in a free state occasional resistance may morally be justified, yet are of opinion that the measures of those administrations, which Mr. Wilkes opugned, called not for animadversion; they, even should they confess the sincerity of his motive, will still condemn his conduct. It perhaps is yet too soon to speak of this with firmness: posterity.

will better decide than we of the present day.

Whether the peace of 1763 was honourable or disgraceful; whether the minister of that day, however learned, however well-intentioned otherwise, was in truth a man, "who wanted wisdom, and held principles incompatible with freedom;" whether, without much evil of design mentally, a young sovereign, new to public business, secure upon a powerful throne, and strong in the confidence of the personal love of his people, did or did not incline too much to dispense with the services of those, who, as men of ability and connexion, of interest and popularity, were most dear to the country, and therefore most able to render it essential benefits; whether, from thwarted inclination, he did or did not feel more impatience than age and experience could approve, or the free notions

prevalent amongst his subjects rendered wise: these, all require time and investigation ere we are enabled to determine; and at last can only be decided by a careful examination of the facts which have marked the reign of the sovereign alluded to. All these, however, must be known and weighed, before Mr. Wilkes can peremptorily be condemned. In one respect indeed, he may be pardoned, even in the minds of those who most inculcate passiveness. Unless it shall be said, that no disapprobation is properly expressed, except in Parliament (a doctrine, which would go nigh, I fear, quickly to destroy the free sentiment of the deliberative body itself), one need require only an admission of the possibility of sincerely condemning, politically, the peace of 1763.—Allow but that, and that from the free habits of English discussion the attack made

upon it was not unwarrantable ; and for the rest, no wondrous science of defence is necessary.

The North Briton arose out of the attack upon the peace : its much-famed No. 45, to me, aloof from the feelings of that period, seems not, I own, so violent or intemperate as to call for state interference. Government thought otherwise, and assumed the posture of an assailant ; and by the mode in which it procured " The Essay " it may be thought stood fully committed. The contest was in consequence fair ; and Mr. Wilkes, for the spirit and firmness with which he contended, merits no common praise. Through him the people of England gained the abolition of general warrants, the better security of their papers, and the security also of the elective franchise. By him was caused the Grenville act ; by



him, that disinclination which Parliament has since shewn to avoid, by means of privilege, the trial by jury. If it be renown to have abolished ship-money, let it be considered as something to have done what Wilkes has done. I know not, if it may not be regretted, that his political opportunities were not of a less domestic sort. He was indeed "a silent senator," but he possibly might have rendered some service in council. He possessed many of the qualities and propensities of a great mind. He, I believe, loved his country; he loved fame. He was careless of money; he respected ability, even though greater than his own. He had foresight, he had decision, he had unconquerable steadiness.

There is yet a charge preferred against him, which, if established, might go far to deprive him of all pretensions to pa-

triotism. The story is told in a wandering publication, upon the authority of Lord Orford \*. A somebody is asserted to have been assured by somebody, that he had seen in a book, which he supposed to be the pension-list of a minister of France, the name of Wilkes. His Lordship thence infers that Wilkes came over to England as the agent of the French, to embarrass the English administration. A more idle tale, as it appears to me, has not often been narrated. From 1763 to 1771, the most active part of the life of Wilkes, France was at peace with England. Those

\* In the same work Lord Orford is made to observe, that the story of the sacrilege proves that Johnson had a bad heart. I have turned to it, in the *Journey to the Hébrides*. The pillage of a church was shipped off—and Johnson adds, “I suppose no one will lament to hear that this cargo of sacrilege was lost in the passage:”—and this serio-comic jest indicates badness of heart!!!

events which his election and expulsion produced, surely, could in common sense have scarcely been foreseen by foreigners. I do not think there is a colour for the suggestion. Mr. Wilkes's poverty also at that period of his exertions is his shield. His embarrassed situation is known. From the Rockingham administration (its members had upon the question of general warrants and many others sided with him) he received pecuniary assistance, though their influence was not sufficient to procure his pardon. In consequence of the *known* state of his circumstances was the Duke of Grafton led to suppose he would enter into terms. Upon the notoriety of those circumstances was the public subscription founded. There could be no deceit in them. Wilkes, had he sold himself to France, would not have sold himself at a low price. If the story

were true, a bribe was given without an adequate motive; and he who received it, received it without any appearance of increased wealth or diminished want; and this too, although eyes of watchfulness were placed on every side of him. The tale rests upon the hearsay of a hearsay, upon the supposition of a supposition—it rests upon nothing.

Mr. Wilkes, though attached to the gay manners of France, was in politics Antigallican. He doubted their good faith, even in the commercial treaty\*. Whilst in the chair of magistracy, he proposed a resolution that no French wines should be given at the public entertainments of the City.

The public life of Wilkes may supply reflection with many lessons. To those who guide the affairs of free governments it is a warning, how in the

\* Vol. iii. letter xlvii. page 194.

plenitude of mightiness they lightly condemn even a private individual. It may teach them that, as the guardians of public morals, as well as public security, they should scorn to accomplish a desired object by low means: it may teach them that they cannot resort to such without danger. It may confirm, a century or two hence, perhaps (should a crisis arise to make resolution necessary) it may confirm individuals in manly resolution, from the assurance that whilst they act under the shadow of the constitution and the laws, their country will not forsake them, because their country cannot so do, without surrendering her own rights. To the history of the life of Wilkes may be applied an elegant illustration, once, modestly, used by his friend Mr. Hastings of himself, when Governor General of India. It is like the talisman of Oriental

fable, upon which hangs the fortune of empires. Its substance might be mere stone, or wood, or marble, but its accidental properties involved in them the fate of thousands, the freedom of a kingdom. It cannot be forgotten, that in the person of Mr. Wilkes a point was put in issue, upon the decision of which depended the liberties of England. The difference might not have been felt for years. Beneath a good king it would not have been felt. In other and different times it was a standing-place upon which to set foot and thrust aside the constitution. The old forms and names of ancient institutions might be suffered to remain, but the spirit and meaning of them would be gone for ever.

The public has lately been put in possession of the letters of many celebrated individuals. Letters are valuable

either as they lay open the character of their author, or as they afford positive instruction. The present collection does the former more than the latter. They are written in the most perfect spirit of confidence to a daughter whom he dearly loved. How much he prized her, will be collected from the letters themselves. They do not convey much instruction ; for, at the time they were written, she was past the age of instruction. He was well able nevertheless to give instruction. To his other daughter his lessons were such, as might stand in competition with those of Lord Chatham, lately given to the world by Lord Grenville.

It may be thought that his expressions of regard and esteem in the present series are too frequent and warm to be natural, and that his affection (as he in

his letters says of the virtues of a friend named in them) was *factise* \*, but it was too uniform and constant to be so. Upon every occasion, and in every place, whether openly or confidentially, he still spoke in the same terms. He was, indeed, an anxious and most affectionate father—a tender and dutiful son. Such his letters shew him to have been, and such in truth he was. He was not, as Lord Talbot asserted of him, an atheist †. There were not only sentiments of piety, but, strange to say, there was in his mind ‡ a *tincture* of superstition.

It is to be regretted, the Editor possessed not a full power of omitting as many of the letters as he chose. As they stand however, they will, I think,

\* Vol. iii. letter xxxvii. p. 148.

† Vol. ii. letter xlviii. p. 113. Vol. iii. letter lxxii. p. 261.

‡ Vol. iii. letter lii. p. 209.



be found amusing. If they equal not the imagery and combination of Burns, nor the criticism, interest, and singularity of Cowper—they contain specimens of much playful vivacity \*, and are occasionally sprinkled (those of the latter volumes especially) with anecdote †. They have also the effect produced by the letters of Swift—they contain many names familiar to the public—and one is tempted therefore to read on in spite of resolution. The style of them is, I think, better than the epistolary style of Lord Chatham. Even where nothing is told, it is at least told with precision; and it does not therefore weary like the greater part of Richardson's correspondence, in which there is often not much meaning, and that meaning so loosely expressed, as to appear still less. On the whole,

\* See vol. ii. letters vi. xx. xl. xlvii. &c.

† See vol. iii. letter xlv. p. 187.

these letters are not, in my judgment, disgraceful to Mr. Wilkes's memory.

The rumour that Mr. Wilkes was engaged in the composition of his own life \*, had a foundation. I am not able to say if the life be now existing or not. The private letters addressed to Mr. Wilkes by Junius, *are* in being: they are in the hands of a gentleman, who thinks however that we are not yet removed enough from the time at which they were written to allow of their publication.

\* See vol. ii. letter lxxiii. p. 200.



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P O E M S.

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# POEMS.

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IMITATED FROM THE FRENCH.

TRUCE to nice art—Exactness I despise ;  
Light and unfetter'd be my lay :  
Let those, who write to live, correctness prize ;  
I write to trifle life away.

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† J'abandone l'exactitude  
Aux gens qui riment par métier ;  
D'autres font des vers par étude,  
J'en fais pour me desennuier.

CRISSET.

† This motto is prefixed to the Crazy Tales, in an edition of which Mr. Wilkes has written "These Tales are excellent. They are the composition of my friend, John Stephenson Hall, Esq. The other verses in this volume, and the MSS. are Mr. Wilkes's."

Stephenson Hall was the Eugenius of Sterne. EDIT.

\* TO MIRA, ON NEW-YEAR'S DAY, 1761.

REVOLVING years add, Mira, to your charms,  
And bolder throbs my pulse to love's alarms;  
Yet shall those heav'nly charms at last decay,  
And this my sprightly pulse forget to play:  
Then wisely let me all my hours employ;  
Too swift they fly, but be they wing'd with joy!  
May *wit* and *beauty* their blest pow'rs unite,  
*Wit* rule the day, and *beauty* rule the night!  
The pleasing chase may I through life pursue,  
All day with *Armstrong*, and all night with *you*.

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A WELL-KNOWN CHARACTER.

[MR. GARRICK.]

LITTLE his body, but much less his soul,  
All things by halves, but nothing in the whole;  
He comes prepar'd by nature, and by art,  
With half a head, but not quite half a heart,  
Half cowardice, half courage to dispense,  
Half modesty, half pride, half wit, half sense.

\* The Poems marked with an asterisk were printed by Mr. Wilkes at a private press which he had at his house in Great George Street, in 1763. They form the verses bound up with the Tales. EDIT.

\* TO A LADY † WHO SANG IN TOO LOW  
A VOICE.

WHEN beauteous Mira's gentle voice  
Divides the yielding air,  
Fix'd on her lips, the falt'ring sounds  
Excess of joy declare.

There ling'ring round the rosy gate,  
They view their fragrant cell,  
Unwilling to depart that mouth  
Where all the graces dwell.

Some tuneful accents strike the sense  
With soft imperfect sound,  
While thousand others die within,  
In their own honey drown'd.

Yet through this cloud distinct and clear  
Sweet sense directs its dart,  
And, while it seems to shun the ear,  
Strikes full upon the heart.

† Mrs. Withers, who went to heaven in 1767.



**ON THE PRINT OF ALDERMAN SAWBRIDGE  
IN THE HABIT OF A ROMAN TRIBUNE.**

**THE lion's skin in vain he wears;  
He cannot hide his ass's ears.**

**\* THE TEMPLE OF THE MUSES.**

**THE Muses and Graces to Phoebus complain'd,  
" That no more on the earth a Sappho † remain'd,**

† Of the intimacy which subsisted between the noble family of the Temples and Mr. Wilkes, it is scarcely necessary to speak. The following lines were written by Countess Temple (the Sappho of the lines above) in allusion to Mr. Wilkes's confinement in the Tower. EDIT.

**THE JEWEL IN THE TOWER.**

**A SONG.**

**I.**

**If what the Tower of London holds  
Is valued more than all its power;  
Then counting what it now enfolds,  
How wondrous rich is London Tower !**

That the empire of wit was now at an end,  
 And on beauty alone the sex must depend ;  
 For the men he had giv'n all his fancy and fire ;  
 Art of healing to Armstrong as well as his lyre."  
 When Apollo replied, " To make you amends,  
 In one fair you shall see Wit and Virtue good friends :

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## II.

I think not of the armory,  
 Nor of the guns and lions' roar ;  
 Nor yet the valu'd library,  
 But of the Jewel in the Tower.

## III.

These are the marks upon it found :  
 King William's crest it bears before ;  
 And Liberty's engraven round,  
 Though now confin'd within the Tower.

## IV.

With thousand methods they did try it,  
 Its firmness strengthen'd every hour ;  
 They were not able all to buy it,  
 And so they sent it to the Tower.

The *Grecian's* high spirit and sweetness I'll join  
 With a true *Roman* virtue, to make it divine ;  
 Your pride and my boast, thus form'd, would you  
     know,  
 You must visit the earthly Elysium of Stow.

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## v.

The owners modestly reserv'd  
     It in a decent Aylesb'ry bower ;  
 And cannot think it has deserv'd  
     The *Cæsar's* † honour of the Tower.

## vi.

The day shall come, to make amends,  
     Of liberty th' exulting hour,  
 When o'er his foes, and 'midst his friends,  
     Shall shine the Jewel of the Tower.

† The old lion named *Cæsar*.

## \* ON TWO LATE CONVERSIONS.

HAIL ! holy, heavenly convert ! Bower † cries ;  
 Hail ! holy, heavenly convert ! Paul replies.  
 So two poor rogues who find their credit fail,  
 To cheat the world, become each other's bail.

† Archibald Bower, the author of the *Lives of the Popes*, professed himself a convert to Protestantism. He was, I believe, educated as a Roman Catholic. Dr. Douglas, "the scourge of impostors," favoured the public with an exposure of his historical misrepresentations. EDIT.

Paul Whitehead, the author of *Manners*, a Satire, and other poems, was a convert of a different description. *His* conversion was from infidelity: he was at one period of his life a sub-member of the brotherhood of Medmenham Abbey. EDIT.

## \* TWO OLD SIMILES.

As theameleon, who is known  
 To have no colours of his own,  
 Has pow'r to take the different hue  
 Of every thing within his view ;  
 Thus *Lyttelton* awhile by *Pitt*  
 Appear'd a patriot and a wit ;

Stole all the *Grenvilles'* sterling sense,  
 Stole *Murray's* art and eloquence ;  
 Was much admir'd in ev'ry part,  
 Though ne'er belov'd—he stole no heart.  
 Now false *Newcastle's* humble tool,  
 He grows a parasite and a fool ;  
 Helps out poor *Bower*, when hist'ry fails,  
 To cook up stupid, popish tales ;  
 With *West* † our holy faith abuses,  
 And with the *Bricklayer* ‡ works the Muses.

† Gilbert West, who by his book has made some good Christians doubt of that great article of our faith, the *resurrection* ; as *Lyttelton*, by his *Letter on the Conversion of St. Paul*, made a great divine wish that St. Paul had never been converted, that such a handle against us might not have been given to infidels by this weak advocate.

‡ Henry Jones, first a bricklayer, then a poet, though not of a class to *build* the lofty song.

Notwithstanding this sneer, Gilbert West's treatise is certainly the work of no mean reasoner. Of Lord Lyttelton's *Dissertation on the Conversion of St. Paul*, Dr. Johnson has said that it is an argument "to which infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer." Henry Jones is the author of "The Earl of Essex," and other tragedies. EDIT.

**INSCRIPTION IN THE CHURCHYARD OF BALA,  
IN MERIONETHSHIRE.**

Sacred to the Memory  
of

**EVAN LLOYD, Clerk, A. M.**

of this Parish.

Born May 2, 1734 ; Died Jan. 26, 1776 ;

Aged 42.

Oh ! pleasing poet, friend for ever dear,  
Thy memory claims the tribute of a tear :  
In thee was join'd whate'er mankind admire,  
Keen wit, strong sense, the poet's, patriot's fire.  
Temper'd with gentleness, such gifts were thine,  
Such gifts with heart-felt anguish we resign.

## \* INFAMIE SACRUM.

**H**ic situs est

Robertus Walpole, Comes Orfordiæ,  
 Qui summo cum consilio, et nefandâ improbitate,  
 Patriam in maximo habens odio, et ab eâ jure  
 exclusus,

Deâ Corruptelâ fisus,  
 (Numen quod unicum coluit)

Servitutem firmissimam, et mores pessimos,

Omnigenâ expulsâ pietate,

Pro virili instituere conatus est.

Talem vixisse, et senem mori, ne mireris, lector:

Socios maximos habuit,

Fratrem Horatium, Ducem Novocastrensem,

Et omnes reipublicæ hostes,

Privatos etiam, et publicos:

Nefas est addere,

Cæsarem etiam et Senatum.

## SACRED TO DISGRACE.

HERE lies

Robert Walpole, Earl of Orford,  
 Who with most advised premeditation and  
 profligate dishonesty,  
 Bearing towards his country the deepest hatred,  
 and by her justly hated in return,  
 Confiding in the Goddess of Corruption,  
 (the single deity whom he worshipped,)  
 Every feeling of duty being banished,  
 Endeavoured his utmost to establish  
 A slavery not to be shaken, and manners of the  
 basest sort.  
 That he should such have lived and such in old age  
 have died,"

forbear to wonder, Reader :

His chief intimates were

His brother Horace, the Duke of Newcastle,  
 And all who were adverse to the Commonweal,  
 Whether open or concealed foes;  
 It were *criminal* to add,  
 Even the Monarch and the Parliament.

EDIT.



\* ON MISS LINLEY'S RETIRING TO  
RICHMOND †.

AH, fatal groves ! sad Echo cries,  
You 're fair Eliza's choice ;  
The dying swains accuse her eyes,  
The nightingales her voice.

† I suspect this to be from a Greek Epigram, but  
I have not been able to find the original. EDIT.

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ON THE MINIATURE PORTRAIT OF MISS  
WILKES, BY GOSSETT.

THE beautiful and soft outline  
Gossett or Reynolds may design ;  
And Reynolds shew the wondrous grace  
Of Wilkes's faultless form and face :  
But to no mortal is it given,  
Prometheus-like, to steal from heaven  
The piercing lightning of the skies,  
Or match the lustre of her eyes.

TO MISS WILKES, ON HER BIRTHDAY,  
AUGUST 16, 1767.

WRITTEN IN FRANCE.

AGAIN I tune the vocal lay  
On dear Maria's natal day.  
This happy day I'll not deplore  
My exile from my native shore :  
No tear of mine to-day shall flow  
For injur'd England's cruel woe,  
From impious wounds to Freedom given,  
The first, most sacred gift of Heaven.  
The Muse with joy shall prune her wing,  
Maria's ripen'd graces sing ;  
And, at seventeen, with truth shall own  
The bud of beauty's fairly blown.  
Softness and sweetest Innocence  
Here shed their gentle influence ;  
Fair Modesty comes in their train,  
To grace her sister Virtue's reign.  
Then to give spirit, taste, and ease,  
The sov'reign art, the art to please ;  
Good-humour'd Wit and Fancy gay,  
To-morrow cheerful as to-day,  
The sunshine of a mind serene,  
Where all is peace within, are seen.

What can the grateful Muse ask more?  
 The Gods have lavish'd all their store.  
 Maria shines their darling care,  
 Still keep her, Heav'n, from every snare !  
 May still unspotted be her fame,  
 May she remain through life the same,  
 Unchang'd in all—except in name !

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IMPROMPTU †.

A VERY pretty young lady said to a gentleman,  
 at Bath, in the great crowd at Dawson's ball,  
 "I can't bear to be so squeezed by people one  
 does not know." The gentleman (Mr. W.), an  
 old friend of the lady, borrowed her pencil and  
 wrote,

WITH spirit, lovely Lydia cries,  
 Sly Cupid basking in her eyes,  
 "I can't bear the creatures who thus press and  
 shove—  
 No—let me be press'd by the man whom I  
 love."

† See the Letters, vol. i. EDIT.

## TO MISS WILKES, ON HER BIRTHDAY, 1768.

WRITTEN IN PRISON.

How shall the Muse in prison sing,  
 How prune her drooping ruffled wing ?  
 Maria is the potent spell,  
 E'en in these walls all grief to quell,  
 To cheer the heart, rapture inspire,  
 And wake to notes of joy the lyre,  
 The tribute verse again to pay  
 On this auspicious festive day.  
 When doom'd to quit the patriot band,  
 And exil'd from my native land,  
 Maria was my sure relief;  
 Her presence banish'd every grief;  
 Pleasure came smiling in her train,  
 And chas'd the family of Pain.  
 Let *lovers* every charm admire,  
 The easy shape, the heavenly fire  
 That from those modest beaming eyes  
 The captive heart at once surprise :  
 A father's is another part ;  
 I praise the virtues of the heart,  
 And wit so eloquent and free,  
 Attemper'd sweet with modesty.

And may kind Heaven a lover send  
Of sense, of honour, and a friend,  
Those virtues always to protect,  
Those beauties—never to neglect !

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TO MISS WILKES, ON HER BIRTHDAY, 1777.

THE noblest gift you could receive,  
The noblest gift to-day I'd give:  
A father's heart I would bestow,  
But that you stole it long ago.

## ON MISS H. WILKES†.

THE Graces nurs'd her from her birth,  
 The Virtues gave her sterling worth,  
 And Elegance with Pleasure came,  
 Soon as they heard dear Harriet's name.

† To this lady, in 1800, were addressed the following lines. She had playfully challenged the gentleman who wrote them, to compliment her in verse, as gracefully as her father had complimented Mrs. Withers (vol. i. p. 189). They are not inelegant, but it seems to me not so refined as those of Mr. W. EDIT.

TO A LADY WHO, HAVING ENTERTAINED HIM  
 WITH MUSIC AND SOME EXQUISITE DRAW-  
 INGS, CALLED THE AUTHOR TO ANOTHER OC-  
 CUPATION.

O SKILL'D in spells of magic art,  
 With nature's proudest powers to vie;  
 To win with sounds the raptur'd ear,  
 Or hold enchain'd the gazing eye!

Thou bad'st this glorious heav'n arise,  
 Thou led'st me to th' æth'ial plain;  
 Now, like a faithful guide thou com'st,  
 To give me to the world again.

EPITAPH ON MISS H. WILKES'S FAVOURITE  
OWL PETER.

**M**INERVA's bird, poor Peter, 's dead,  
The gravest form, the gravest head ;  
From glare and noise he chose to go,  
To quiet in the realms below.

---

As some lov'd vision-favour'd youth,  
Whom dreams to realms of bliss convey,  
Sees at his side a spirit stand,  
Companion of his nightly way ;

I look in wonder on thy brow,  
In wonder view thy light locks play ;  
I hear the crystal portals close,  
And turn the tribute due to pay.

Ø vanish not—the dreary change  
Too sudden comes—still, still be near !  
So shall I deem the vision true,  
Be thou, ærial form, but here.

TO MISS H. WILKES. 1796.

MINERVA's self at Harriet's birth  
 Forsook the skies to visit earth ;  
 And with the grave and stately dame  
 The laughter-loving Venus came.  
 The Graces too were in her train,  
 Nor did a Muse in Heaven remain :  
 Cupid, and he alone, still coy,  
 Appears a pouting, angry boy :  
 The nymph derides his power supreme,  
 And darts and arrows calls a dream.  
 Beware, proud girl—the boy, in rage,  
 Not all thy magic can assuage ;  
 Vain all thy prayers, vain all thy art—  
 Then nought can sooth him but thine heart.

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ON THE REVERSE OF A WATCH PRESENTED  
 TO MISS WILKES.

FROM the deep gloom of sickness and of pain,  
 Your tender care brought cheerful health again.



EPITAPH ON LADY VANE'S † LAPDOG VENY.

At thieves I bark'd, at lovers wagg'd my tail ;  
And thus I pleas'd both Lord and Lady Frail.

† Lady Vane published her memoirs in Peregrine Pickle, under the name of Lady Frail.

Monsieur du Bellay a fait une epigramme admirable sur un chien qui aboyoit les voleurs, et qui laissoit entrer sans bruit les amans de sa maitresse.

Latratu fures excepi, mutus amantes ;  
Sic placui domino, sic placui dominæ.

